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REV. W. A. CAMERON

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Messages From Modern Prophets

W. A. CAMERON

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MESSAGES FROM MODERN PROPHETS

"And not by Eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light."

BY

REV. W. A. CAMERON

Minister of Yorkminster Baptist Church, Toronto

Author of
"The Gift of God", *"The Potter's Wheel"*
"No Room in the Inn", etc.

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To The Memory of

Clarence L. Starr

WHOSE FRIENDSHIP WAS A CONSTANT SOURCE
OF INSPIRATION AND STRENGTH
AND TO

George Cross

WHOSE KEEN MIND AND LOYAL HEART
HELPED ME TO FIND GOD.

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"What thou seest, write in a book."—*John.*

"For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors."
—*Tennyson.*

"The book had in a high degree excited us to self-activity, which is the best effect of any book."—*Carlyle.*

"There is a breadth and genuineness of self-knowledge which one gets from the silent friendship of great authors."—*Austin Phelps.*

"Something that gives our feeble light
A high immunity from Night,
Something that leaps life's narrow bars
To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;
A seed of sunshine that doth leaven
Our earthly dullness with the beams of stars,
And glorify our clay
With light from fountains elder than the Day."
—*Lowell.*

"I, too, will turn my face to the wind, and cast my handful of seed on high."—*Gaelic Saying.*

PREFACE

For many years I have found solace and delight in the study of literature. This study has revealed the intimate relation between literature and religion. They are old and good friends. Each is indebted to the other in more ways than have been recognized. An instructive book might easily be written on literature's debt to religion or religion's debt to literature. Much of the world's permanent literature has had religion as its central theme. The great religious movements of history have quickened literary activity and created some of the great literary masterpieces. Whenever a poet of the first rank gets into the higher region of his thought and utterance, he has become a mouthpiece of God. From Homer to our modern poets, the great poetic utterances are God's speech to the world. This has often been equally true of novelists and writers of prose. God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. God continues to speak through those prophets and through others who have the prophetic fire.

During the past few years it has been my practice to deliver a series of addresses to my Sunday evening congregation under the general title of *Messages From Modern Prophets.* The chapters in this volume have been chosen from these addresses and almost at random. I have often

been urged to publish such a volume and I am glad to be able at last to accede to the wishes of my friends. All the addresses contained in this volume seemed to interest large congregations in Toronto as well as an invisible multitude through the radio. Let it be understood that I assume full responsibility for the views here expressed. They do not pretend to be an adequate interpretation of the works selected. These selections are employed as illustrations effective in establishing a point of contact between preacher and hearer.

One morning sermon is inserted because of its historic association. Besides, there are two memorial addresses delivered in connection with the passing of the two men to whom the book is inscribed; the one a distinguished Canadian surgeon, and loyalest of comrades; the other a Christian teacher to whom I owe more than I can express. I count myself fortunate in having the assistance of so keen a student of literature as Dean W. S. W. McLay, of McMaster University, who has read the proofs, and of Miss E. N. Jackson, who has rendered valuable secretarial aid.

W. A. CAMERON.

Yorkminster Church,
Toronto.

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THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

"I must abide at thy house."

Although in the poems of Robert Burns the humour, pathos, and passion are all of the first order of excellence, yet it is his admirable talent of catching "the manners living as they rise", of depicting character, and the boldness and freedom with which he ranges through the human breast, which give to his writings their universal charm. He belongs to no one age or country, because he belongs to all. He was indeed a national poet, and for that very reason he is intelligible to all mankind. The energies of his mighty nature are borne on the wings of thought and emotion to every quarter of the globe. He is a priest to us all of the wonder and bloom of the world. He sings of what he best knows. There are no fictitious griefs for which he invites our tears, no imaginary bliss in which he asks us to partake. All that he utters flows forth from the very fountain of life within his heart. It is the living fire of the soul that flames in his burning words. Whether he melts to tenderness, or moves us to mirth; whether he kindles us with his own ardent patriotism, or touches our softer affections, we still feel that we

are brought into real contact with a nature like our own.

In taking account of its men of genius the world is too apt to forget how much is due to the parents of whom those men of genius were born. Burns is an admirable example of the largeness of that often forgotten debt. His parents were worthy and respectable people in their station. His father was a gardener by trade and his talents were of a superior order. He had read with care many useful works. His principles were pure and upright; his piety was sincere and unaffected; and his efforts to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of his children entitle him to the warmest commendation. In one of his poems his son pays him this tribute:

> My father was a farmer, upon the Carrick border,
> And soberly he brought me up in decency and order;
> He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing,
> For without an honest, manly heart, no man was worth regarding.

William Burnes was a poor man. From the days of his early manhood, when poverty drove him from home on his long search after the bare necessaries of life, to the closing scene at Lochlea, William Burnes was engaged in a never ceasing struggle. The only remaining monument of any conquest he made is to be seen in the little cottage

at Alloway where his famous son was born. That son never forgot his debt to his father. If he never had it in his power to render his father a monetary recompense, he has reared to his memory a monument more durable than bronze in that picture of "the saint, the father and the husband," which impresses itself upon every reader of *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

In the same poem may be found the tribute of Burns to the industry of his mother who

> Wi' her needle and her shears,
> Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new.

Surely it is no exaggeration to say that *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is the finest picture of life among the lowly ever produced by pen or brush. Nor does it detract from its grandeur to know that the sire was the poet's father; that the materials for its composition were all gathered at his quiet fireside; and that the little room where the poet was born was the scene of the drama. It is rather an additional proof of its grandeur that these lines have elevated this thatch-roofed cottage above the mansions which surround it, and made even the very rafters of the old tenement more valuable to-day than the carved tracery of the most princely palace in Britain.

The scenes in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* are tender and moral; they are solemn and devotional;

they rise at length to a strain of grandeur and sublimity which modern poetry has not surpassed. The cottager returning from his labours has no servants to accompany him, to partake of his fare or to receive his instructions.

> November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
> The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
> The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh:
> The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
> The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,—
> This night his weekly moil is at an end,—
> Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
> Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
> And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
> hameward bend.

The circle which he joins is composed of his wife and children only; and if it admits of less variety, it affords an opportunity for representing scenes that more strongly interest the affections. The younger children running to meet him and clamouring round his knee:

> Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
> And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

The elder children returning from their weekly labours with the neighbouring farmers, dutifully depositing their little gains with their parents, and receiving their father's blessing and instructions, he exhorts to be obedient to their master, and to render faithful labour when the master's eye is not upon them. Above all

To fear the Lord alway!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might;
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright!

Then come the incidents of the courtship of Jenny, their eldest daughter "woman grown". She confesses to her mother that a neighbour lad would spend the evening in their home. The mother inquires his name, and, learning that he is no "wild worthless rake," welcomes him warmly. All unite to make the bashful young man feel at home. Here the poet digresses to philosophize on the wonder of pure love and the treachery of the villain who could betray such a girl.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child,
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction
wild?

Now the supper hour arrives. Oatmeal pudding, milk, and cheese a twelve-month old, constitute the evening meal. After their frugal supper they gather around the fireside to unite in the worship of God. Here is a picture the most deeply affecting of any which the rural muse has ever presented

to the view. Parents, children, and guest unite their voices in singing some familiar psalm. Then "the priest-like father reads the sacred page;" reads of Abram's friendship with God, or Moses' warfare with Amalek, of "Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry," or "rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire," or perhaps of the Saviour's sacrifice for men, or of those who took up the Cross and followed Him even unto death. The reading ended, the father prays. It is a prayer worthy of the humble cotter. He is thankful that his family circle is unstained by sin and unbroken by death. He expresses the sincere longing of his soul that they might meet thus in the future world "no more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear."

When the family prayer is concluded and the social evening ended, the friends separate. The guest goes home, "the youngling cottagers retire to rest," and, as the last act of the night, the parents engage in secret prayer, so impressive in its simple solemnity,

> That He, who stills the ravens' clamorous nest,
> And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
> Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
> For them and for their little ones provide;
> But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

As we analyze the scenes depicted in this poem we discover certain elements that may profitably

be emphasized. To begin with, *there is the glory of the commonplace.* Burns was distinctly the poet of the people, the bard of democracy. He enunciated with unrivalled force the great and fundamental truth, that "rank is but the guinea stamp: the man's the gowd for a' that." His primary purpose was to insist upon the dignity of personal work and to paint the beauty and holiness of humble life; to cast a transfiguring light upon the simple affections, the humble occupations, the unaffected piety of the toiling poor. He showed that the life of a roadside labourer might be as tragic as that of a king. And here he elevates a cotter to the sacred dignity of priest, and gives him sublime conceptions of eternity and eternal things.

This is the evidence of real greatness in poetry, even as it is in art. Of the many beautiful pictures of the Supper at Emmaus there is but one, so far as I am aware, which in its perfect art expresses the deepest religious feeling. This is by Rembrandt, and is found in the Louvre. Venetian artists seized upon this subject to express the luxuriousness and opulence of contemporary Venetian life. Carpaccio, Veronese, Titian, Rubens, have all beautiful works representing this subject—beautiful as works of art but utterly devoid of religious truth and sentiment. Carpaccio paints an apartment made splendid by marble columns; Veronese loads the table with a sumptuous repast; Titian

places his patron, Charles V., beside the Saviour, and his son, the infant Philip II., as a page, while the eye is caught by the costly victuals which load the table, or the beautiful Italian landscape, seen between the stately columns. Anything more unlike reality could scarcely be conceived.

In Rembrandt, however, something of the beauty, the simplicity, the tenderness of the Gospel narrative is recovered. The room is bare and without adornment; the table, covered with a white cloth, has laid upon it only the simplest fare. Seated at the table are the two pilgrims and their unknown Guest. A soft light illumines the Saviour's face—that light of which Rembrandt knew the secret—all else is in shadow. It is the moment when the Saviour, having blessed the bread, breaks it. There is a gentle and tender look upon His face, and the pilgrims as they behold Him are suddenly enlightened; joy and wonder and worship thrill their hearts. The effect is produced because Rembrandt had the eyes that could perceive the glory of the commonplace.

The poet draws a magic circle around a flower, and we uplift our hearts in praise and prayer. The artist draws his circle around a little cottage, and we see there is a glory we did not suspect. But may we not all glorify the humblest duties and experiences of men in order that we may see that in any station of life where God may place us there

may be found joys such as a king might envy, and opportunities for service such as angels look for in vain. Here is a book which I have read a dozen times. The heroine is but a social worker in a great city, who simply performs her round of daily tasks faithfully and tries to bring a bit of sunshine into the homes of the people she visits. And the hero is a humpbacked lad who does nothing more than bear his affliction patiently, who tries to make the best of every situation and then dies with a prayer on his lips. That is all, but it is enough to bring a lump into the throat. The author draws a circle around a scene enacted a hundred times every day in this land of ours, and then we realize the sublimity of it, the heroism, the fidelity, the patience, the unselfishness of the service.

Oh, when shall we begin to see the poetry, the beauty, the eternal blessedness of common work; the loyalty, the patriotism, the high Christian service there may be in simply conducting an honest business! We are forever straining after the startling, the dramatic, the sensational. We want episodes, crises, thrills. We read D'Aubigné's history of the Reformation with bated breath as we follow the dramatic episodes and hairbreadth escapes of Martin Luther in his struggles for religious freedom; but it is an open question whether the little man fiddling about with a few wooden

blocks in that little German workshop and inventing the art of printing did not do more to establish the Reformation than even the great Luther himself.

To many of us the opportunity of great usefulness is denied. Our resources are limited; the burden of daily care keeps our noses to the grindstone and our thoughts at home. Never fear. If we cannot do some great and glorious thing, God is reading the secret of our souls and saying unto us, "It is well that it was in thine heart". It is all you can do to keep things straight in your own little world of trade. Never fear; you will supply your neighbour with an honest article and find employment for those who otherwise might join the ranks of the unemployed. It is all you can do to keep a roof over the heads of your family, and fill their mouths and cover their backs. Never fear; it was thus with Burns's cotter. Your home, like his, is bare and lowly, but it is sweet and clean. Your wife and children, like his, are happy, and when you are dead and gone, and your name is forgotten among men, strong sons and fair daughters will think sweetly of the old home, and bless the memory of the man who did his best for them.

What is it then, that transfigures commonplace things and gives them a glory which so delights poets and painters and prophets? It is the infinite

which they find dwelling in the finite. The humble home of the cotter becomes a place of enchantment when the horizon widens until it includes God's universe. A single stone becomes God's house, where Jacob says with awe, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

> "A commonplace life" we say and we sigh,
> But why should we sigh as we say?
> The commonplace sun in the commonplace sky,
> Makes up the commonplace day;
> And God, who regardeth each commonplace soul,
> Out of commonplace lives makes His beautiful whole.

Another thing our study of this poem is sure to suggest is *the glory of a Christian home*. It is many years since John Ruskin wrote his glowing words: "This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. So far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose face none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light, —shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea;—so far it vindicates the name and fulfils the praise of Home." It is written in the true Ruskin style, and is exactly what the cotter and his family would have loved to read and listen to. Well they knew the asso-

ciations of the Christian home. And what are these? The sweet tempers, the mutually adjusted natures, the steps that pace the same round of daily duties, the associated prayers, the hands raised for the same hallowed bread, the eyes wet with the same sorrows or lit with the same joys, the hills ascended in the same company, and, as life advances, touched with the same westering sun. This is God's gift of the Christian home to all hearts which "soar, but never roam, true to the kindred points of heaven and home".

Is it true, as widely asserted, that we are losing our home life? Years ago the home was the centre of unity. There the scattered members of the family would gather and join in the old home circle. In those days the wanderer's greatest joy was to see again the old homestead. Thither his memories would return, and he would live over in thought the golden hours of childhood, when the shields of home guarded him from the tumult and worries of the outside world. Sweet to the toiler, when the day's work was over, to return to the bosom of his home. Within that sanctuary the voices of slander were hushed, and the tongues of the deceitful excluded. Perchance the passing years have filled great drifts between that home and us, but there is a wireless telegraphy which still brings us messages from voices that are hushed. Some of us have had more recent experiences

indelibly impressed on our memories. We recall the intensity of feeling with which the word "Blighty" was used. We could not remain unmoved when men straight from the trenches made the air ring with the strains of "Keep the Home-Fires Burning". In such hours we were one in the sweet memory of home, and

> Something down the soldier's cheeks,
> Washed off the stains of powder.

With these sacred memories as a heritage, we do not like to believe that home life is decaying. We are perturbed by the increasing number of divorces. Home after home goes on the rocks before our very eyes. Many of our young people would no more think of taking the cotter's home as a pattern than of dressing themselves in Victorian fashion. The rush and stress and struggle of our modern way of living has much to do with the change. There is far too much driving in our modern life. We are worked up to a kind of feverish heat; we must keep going on. And our young people, after their work is done, cannot remain in the home. Their nerves are highstrung and something must be sought to alleviate the excitement that has been created within them. Together with this is the disturbing fact that wealth and luxury are dissolving and corrupting the discipline that knits the family together in mutual interchange of serviceable functions. There

are no functions left. The services are all hired. The one intelligible desire is to have a good time. Under that false freedom the home is wrecked.

But the great reason for the imperilled home is in the want of family religion. It is this element above all others in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* that endears it to our hearts and causes us to love the poem. It is significant to remember that Jesus himself lived in a village home, subject to the authority of His parents, and for a large part of the time the sole, if not the chief, support of the home. He was constantly a guest in the homes of other people. To Zaccheus He said "This day I must abide at thy house," and from that time on took up His abode as a permanent guest. He meets Simon the Pharisee in his home and partakes of his hospitality. His closest and most intimate experiences are in the home at Bethany. It was while He was enjoying hospitality in the home of an unknown disciple that He instituted the Supper. There is one great fact about the church of apostolic days we should not forget—it was "the church in the house". Nothing can stand in the place of such a church. The organized Church of Christ is an auxiliary of, not a substitute for, the church in the house.

There is one further lesson to be derived from our study which must be mentioned though in a word. Such character as is revealed in the cotter

and such home life as is here portrayed are *the sure and certain guarantee of national strength and permanence.* The climax of the poem is reached when the poet says,

> From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
> That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.

Burns had an intense love for his native country. His heart warmed and his tongue faltered with emotion when he thought of the unflinching struggles of her heroes of old who rushed to victory "red wat shod". In lines that throb and palpitate with pure and noble feeling, he prays that Scotsmen, animated by the high-toned valour of ancient days, may ever be ready, in time of their country's agony, to stand like a wall of fire around their native coasts. And because he loved his native land he wanted her to know the true secret of national glory.

> O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
> That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
> Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
> Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
> (The patriots' God, peculiarly Thou art,
> His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
> Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert.

It is true, in the history of any nation, where there has been heroism and struggle for independence, that the great inspirers of that spirit which will

do anything for a nation's weal have been germinated and encouraged in the quietness and sanctity of a Christian home, in strong manhood and in confident trust in God.

We recall an incident in the history of ancient Israel when the nation was anxious about its own security. The permanence of the national life seemed to be imperilled. How can we maintain our national strength?—that was the great question that was stirring men's souls. The question was being answered as thousands of people are answering it still: "Look to your bulwarks, increase the strength of your fortifications, multiply your military forces, enter into alliance with the most powerful among the nations." This was the predominant counsel of that day. Against it all the prophet of God lifted his voice like the sound of a trumpet. "Oh! Israel, thy strength, thy stability, thy permanence lie not in things like these. The armour will rust and the arm of flesh will fail; the alliance with material forces may be a covenant with death. Not in physical prowess, not in diplomatic shrewdness lies the strength of a nation. It rests in the character of its people." The most dangerous foes of a nation are not outside but within its borders. There lies your weakness, says the brave old prophet, and there will be the secret of your strength. You have been busy making alliances—now make men. That was the

great need of Israel in Isaiah's day, that was the great need of Scotland in Burns's day, that is the great need among all nations in our day.

THE VILLAGE PARSON

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!"

In his *Makers of English Prose* W. J. Dawson writes with fine discernment concerning Oliver Goldsmith's contribution to English literature. We beg leave to quote one paragraph in full. "Certain it is that for the production of the most delicate bloom of literature the childlike mind is needed, and Goldsmith was an eternal child. Amid all the rude and violent influences of his time, he still retained something of the child's divine innocence and grace, the child's sensitiveness and impressionability, and for us he possesses also all the child's loveableness. If he occasionally manifested also all the foibles and the petulance of the child, these are faults which can be readily forgiven him. Without the foibles, the harmless egotism and amusing vanity, the love of fine dress and incapacity of understanding the duty of paying for it, the careless generosity, the total lack of prudence, the unforeseeing pleasure in the hour, the gay neglect of the lessons of the past and the stern monitions of the future, he would not be Goldsmith, he would not be the man whose sim-

plicity is more attractive, and whose folly is more enduring, than the heroism and wisdom of far greater men."

Goldsmith's character presents but few real complexities. What seems most to have impressed his contemporaries was the difference between his eminence as a literary man and his personal insignificance. But when we remember with what temporal and physical disadavantages he started life, much of this is easily intelligible. Until well on in years his life was marked by degradations of which we evidently do not know the half. Naturally these left their mark upon his manners. When we think of his carelessness of money we are glad to remember how much he gave away to those in distress. There is no doubt that he possessed to an unusual degree the Biblical quality of loving-kindness. It is well to remember that the tales to his disadvantage come from such admitted detractors as Boswell. Goldsmith was a man, who, had he given himself a chance, might have achieved even greater fame than fell to his lot. But he was always one who lived from hand to mouth. Tomorrow was too distant a factor to come within the horizon of his calculations. And yet it could be no mean individuality that acquired the esteem of Sir Joshua Reynolds or the eulogy of Samuel Johnson: "Was ever man of letters so loved and so trusted?"

One of his best known poems is *The Deserted Village*. In its central idea and its sympathy with humanity it must be regarded as his greatest work. It ran through five editions in the year of its publication; and has ever since retained its reputation. It was written to express the poet's sorrow at the decay of peasant life and his sympathy with the people at a time when luxury and pomp flourished. His views of political economy have been criticised as unnecessarily pessimistic. However that may be there can be little doubt that he was greatly disturbed over the amassing of wealth in the hands of the few, and over the dishonesty and graft that were evidence of national degeneration.

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade—
> A breath can make them as a breath has made—
> But the bold peasantry, a country's pride,
> When once destroyed can never be supplied.

The "village" of the poem is supposed to be Lissoy, in Ireland, the home of the poet's youth and the place where his father, who was a minister, once had a church. It is impossible to make this assertion with any great confidence. "The truth seems that Goldsmith, living in England, recalled in a poem that was English in its conception many of the memories and accessories of his early life in Ireland, without intending or even caring to draw

an exact picture." At the same time many of the references are undoubtedly to the village where he was reared. He looked forward to the time when in the evening of life he would return to his native hamlet and make it his last resting-place.

> And as the hare whom hounds and horns pursue,
> Pants to the place from whence at first she flew;
> So had I hoped, life's long vexation past,
> Here to return and die at home at last.

But that cannot be. The village is deserted and the hope is blighted.

> Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
> Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
> And desolation saddens all thy green.

When one reads *The Deserted Village* it is the picture of the Parson that rises above everything else. It is with the description of that worthy man that we are chiefly concerned in this study. Here let us note that Mrs. Hodson, a sister of Goldsmith, believed the "parson" to be a portrait of the poet's father. If that be true it is one of the finest compliments ever paid by a son to his father. It is suggestive of an incident in the life of John G. Paton of the New Hebrides. In his autobiography he tells us that the most vital memory of his experience was the day he left home for Glasgow, where he was to make his way in the world. The journey had to be made on foot. Paton's father accompanied him for the first few miles of the

way. When the parting came he tried to speak words of suitable farewell to his son. Emotion choked his sentences and all he could say was "Good-bye, John; God bless you!" "And I, too," says Paton, "I could say little more. I wrung his hand and hurried on." But he had not gone far before curiosity and love prompted him to turn and get a last look at his father. He was still standing on the spot where he had left him. "His head was uncovered and he was praying and I knew that he was praying for me. That sight never left me." Happy the man with such visions of a father!

The village parson is a description of one of the most beautiful characters in literature. We now quote it in full.

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his
place;
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise,
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wand'rings, but reliev'd their
pain;
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields
were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learned
to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all.
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to
raise,
And his last falt'ring accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double
sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service pass'd, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children follow'd with endearing wile,

And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's
smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares dis-
tress'd;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were
given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in
Heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the
storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are
spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

We cannot be grateful enough to Goldsmith for singing the praises of such character. It is not often that a poet trumpets the glory or exalts the honour of such a man. Generally those extolled are made of brass or iron and cast in a rough mould. We have listened to the praise of Caesar because he ruled the world with a rod of iron; and of Luther because he boldly defied the pope of Rome; and of Knox who was stern and the bravest of the brave. But there is another class of persons equally virtuous and equally to be esteemed. We have not heard much of the gentle-minded Melancthon, yet who can doubt that he did as much for the reformation as Luther. We should like to hear more of the gracious Rutherford, and of the heavenly words that distilled from his lips. It is

all right to love the rough granite peaks that defy the storm cloud; it is all wrong to overlook the more humble stone in the valley, on which the weary traveller rests. In this poem Goldsmith sings of the gentleness that makes men great. The Parson was a gentle soul. I do not mean by gentleness the quality which is sometimes mistaken for weakness or softness or irresolution. I mean that method by which strength and resolution accomplish their end. In such gentleness there is no boisterousness and no violence and none of the swaggering that mistakes noise for strength and bluster for courage. Such is the spirit that pulsates in the character before us.

He was a man with *a simple heart.* The whole community had come to recognize his absolute integrity and honesty of purpose. He had no taste for diplomacy and he abhorred duplicity. You cannot imagine him as being interested in ecclesiastical policy and cunning. He was utterly devoid of malice. Reality was with him supreme. He would advocate what appeared to him to be true. His transparent sincerity was known and read by all. Like all the greatest there was something of the child about him; a certain freshness, a kind of sweet unconsciousness. Tennyson might have said of him what he said of the Duke of Wellington, "In his simplicity sublime."

He was a man with *a sympathetic heart.* He

watched and prayed and felt for all. He rejoiced with them that rejoiced and wept with them that wept. He understood what Paul meant when in speaking of the body of Christ he says: "And if any member suffer all the members suffer with it, and if any is honoured all the members rejoice." In the human body the hand and the foot, the eye and the ear are all subordinate to one purpose—the protection and well-being of the body. In protecting the body they protect themselves, since all the members suffer when one member is injured. And the more fully each member prospers when the others prosper or suffers when the others suffer, the nearer is that body to perfection of strength, the higher is it in the physiological scale. If the organs of the body had consciousness they would express it in sympathy with one another, they would each rejoice when one of their number received an accession of health, and weep when another had cause to weep.

This is so in every community which has achieved that oneness of feeling the Parson inspired in his. It is so in a family. For a brother or sister to get into disgrace is a shame and injury to every member of the family. Some of us can remember how true it was in a regiment during the days of war. If a soldier won a decoration for valour every man in the battalion felt that he shared the glory. He was proud to belong to the

same body as a soldier publicly recognized as a hero. He rejoiced with the comrade who had this reason to rejoice. On the other hand, if by evil behaviour any member of the regiment brought a slur on the name, the disgrace was felt by all. It is so in society. Only anarchy can result where one class in a nation rejoices for gain while another weeps for loss. The capitalist who demands too high a price for his products, the workman who demands an unreasonable price for his labour, are injuring the body politic with an injury which by and by will react upon themselves. The heart cannot long prosper when the lungs are diseased; the blood cannot long remain pure when the stomach has ceased to fulfil its functions. These organs can only keep themselves by keeping the others in life also, so with all classes of the nation. And so with all classes of the spiritual community. There are many who have lived on the principle of cultivating a certain callousness to other people's troubles. Many of those living in wealth and luxury have deliberately closed their hearts to the cry of the poor and suffering. They have shut out everything that might remind them that there are poverty, sickness and death in the world. Of such people nature exacts a terrible retribution, which is God's judgment upon spiritual selfishness. For when the blow of misfortune falls upon them it falls with withering force. They have killed the

sympathy which would have made their own sorrow less bitter.

The Parson's sympathy led to service. To relieve the wretched was his pride. Sympathy must never be confounded with pity. One is a surface virtue, the other goes down to the depths. On your way to church you pitied a beggar and threw him a coin. When you analyse the deed, you realise that it was very largely a selfish act. You were really pleasing yourself. It is this spurious pity that supports an army of loafers. This indiscriminate charity which does so much evil in the world is nurtured by selfish laziness. Jesus sympathized with men, and so sought to help them to help themselves. We read that He would meet a cripple begging by the wayside, or a blind man stretching out his hands for alms, and that he gave to the one, not a coin, but the use of his limbs, and to the other the restoration of his sight, so that both might go forward to earn the things necessary to sustain life. Of all the virtues sympathy is one of the most practical. It keeps its feet firmly upon the earth and becomes in very truth hands and feet to God.

Be it also noted that sympathy is often most genuine when it is silent. Indeed it is the only kind that may be possible, for gush is not sympathy. Glibness is very frequently born out of a lack of imagination, and a multitude of words often

covers an incapacity to feel. As silence is usually the first step toward worship, so it is often the only way of expressing sympathy. Tennyson wrote to a friend who had experienced a great loss: "I was the other day present at a funeral, and one of the chief mourners reached me her hand silently almost over the grave, and I as silently gave her mine. No words were possible. And this little note that can do really nothing to help you in your sorrow is just such a reaching of the hand to you, my old college comrade of more than forty years' standing, to show you that I think of you." What eloquence in this! The powerful things are ofttimes the silent things. Feeling must find expression or die, but a look may incarnate the sympathy of the heart and count for more than words.

The Parson's sympathy saved him from an uncharitable spirit in dealing with the fallen. He was careless in scanning their faults—not because he condoned them but because he was an expert in raising those who were guilty of them. He gently scanned his brother man. He had that charity that covereth a multitude of sins, and hopeth all things and thinketh no evil. Evil did not grow like great beams in his own eye while he was searching out the small mote in his neighbour's. No backbiting, censorious spirit here going about its base work with growing relish, reckless that "life and death are in the power of the tongue".

He had put away all malice, hatred, evil-speaking, and uncharitableness. To him had been given grace to illustrate that sympathizing charity which is the bond of perfection.

Let this lesson be learned by all who are inclined to judge harshly the man who has fallen. It is a great gift to be able to sit with the sinner in the spirit of understanding love. If that sinner should be someone dear to us so that his downfall is a betrayal of the family honour, a stain upon the family name, it is all the more necessary that we should guard our feelings from unrighteous anger. Many will recall the dramatic picture which Ian Maclaren has drawn of Lachlan Campbell, that stern and strict elder at Drumtochty, who, when his daughter Flora wandered from the fold, immediately struck her name out of the family Bible. He was dealt with by that charitable soul, Margaret Howe, who revealed his severity in its true light. "Wae's me," she sobbed, "if oor Father had blotted oor names oot o' the Lamb's Book of Life when we left His Hoose. But He sent His ain Son to seek us, and a weary road He cam'. Puir Flora! Tae hae sic' a father!" The rebuke had the desired effect. A Christlike sympathy was born in that austere man's heart.

In the next place I would call attention to the fact that the Parson exercised *a ministry of comfort*. A distinguished preacher once gave this

counsel in sermon-class at college: "Gentlemen, when you are uncertain, as you will often be, on what subject to preach, you cannot be wrong in following the line indicated by the prophet's cry, 'Comfort ye My people, saith the Lord. Speak ye comfortably.' For the truest ministry is the ministry of comfort. You are not ordained to give advice, but to preach glad tidings." And such glad tidings the Parson of our poem preached, not only in the pulpit but "beside the bed where parting life was laid and sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed." A grand ministry is this of comfort. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted by God."

But do we know the meaning of the word we use? What is comfort? Something soothing, inducing a placid, sweet content, an anodyne for the soul? Indeed, but it is nothing of the kind. Com-fort—the root is *fortis,* strong. We get it in fortitude and fortify, and fort, and fortress. The comforter is he who makes strong the soul of his brothers. Comfort is not that which takes away the burden of duty and responsibility from a man, but always that which strengthens his back for the bearing of it. Comfort does not snatch

man away from the realms of temptation. It is ever a gift of power to overcome the temptation. Comfort is that mysterious influence of one personality upon another, whereby men are lifted up out of the Slough of Despond and the Pit of Hopelessness, their feet planted firmly upon the rock, their hearts filled with new force, new faith, new courage, in the power of which they march breast forward, never doubting clouds will break, never dreaming, though right be worsted, wrong will triumph. Comfort is that which makes despair and anguish flee from the struggling soul.

Many a doctor has been the comforter of his patients, not by reason of his medicines, but by the very spontaneous playing of his warm, buoyant, optimistic spirit upon the soul of his patient. Many a teacher has been the comforter of his dull, slow-witted pupil, not trying to transform him into one ignorantly read with lots of learned lumber in his head, but with sympathetic insight seizing upon some one interest that is dear to the lad, aiding him in the development of this interest right up to the top of his bent. Many a mother has been the comfort of her erring boy, when in spite of his waywardness she has never lost hope about him, and manages somehow to infuse something of her own hopefulness into his spirit. Many a minister like the Village Parson has been able to save the outcast by making him feel that some

decent human being cares enough for him to take an interest in the question of whether he is to rise or sink. Grand ministry this, the ministry of comfort!

The secret of the Parson's ministry of sympathy and comfort was *an unselfish love for mankind*. There was something subtle in his unselfishness which brought him richer gifts than greed could ever hope for. The philosophy that teaches us how to get good things by giving good things is the profoundest in the world. It contradicts our preconceived notions, but vindicates itself by the results produced. The essence of Christianity is not in fashioning "doctrines to the varying hour" but in the every day life of the Master. It does not help you to appreciate music to know how many vibrations make the notes of the octave. You may be quite ignorant of the science of music and yet be thrilled by it, and you may know nothing about the science of religion and yet be religious to the heart's core.

And so, to tell the truth in one breath, religion is nothing more than love—that kind of love which pities sin, heals the wounded and helps bereavement to wear the smile of hope. If you look into the life of Christ you find there love as wide as the firmament and as deep as the sea; love as exhaustless as the river which flows eternally into the ocean, but never wholly spends itself.

Let our Parson teach us to love along the line of the perpendicular until we reach the throne of God, and to love along the line of the horizontal until we touch the farthest sorrowing soul. Then we shall have all that is needful—spiritual riches beyond compare, a heart like that of Christ and a life with all the poetry and peace of heaven in it. That is true religion, and there is no other kind that is worth a second thought.

The secret of the Parson's ministry was *a vital and continual fellowship with God*. All his serious thoughts had rest in heaven. He allured to brighter worlds and led the way. Fellowship with God is the secret of useful ministry. The closer we keep to Him in thought and desire, the more effective will our service be. Our vision of duty will be clearer, the alliance between our wills and the divine will firmer, our knowledge of truth ampler, our joy in believing deeper and more rewarding as we walk with Him. Our pitchers will be full if we draw from His fountain. Our expiring torches may be re-kindled from the flames of His altar. The tone and atmosphere of our lives will be sweetened by direct and conscious fellowship with Him. Harriet Beecher Stowe sang this truth in beautiful lines:

> As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
> Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
> So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,

> All heaven's own sweetness seems around it
> thrown.

This is God's way of making himself known. "They glorified God in me," says the apostle. When men saw the one-time persecutor changed into a zealous missionary they thought more of God. Here is a striking sentence at the close of the story of the paralytic lad. "When the multitude saw it, they glorified God which had given such power unto men." When they saw compassion illustrated in the act of healing they thought better of God. When men are genuinely good, genuinely unselfish, genuinely sympathetic and serviceable, God is honoured in such lives. You may recall Mrs. Browning's description of a good woman:

> None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall,
> They knelt more to God than they used—that was
> all.

That was all and that was everything. The woman's goodness made them think more of the woman's God. It was thus with the Village Parson.

This poem has impressed us anew with what *a sacred and holy sphere the Christian ministry covers!* When we have acknowledged all faults and referred to all its disagreeable features we feel like throwing all modest reserve to the winds, and

proclaiming the precious joy we find in such a task. It is easy to justify its claim as the noblest calling that can enlist to itself the enthusiasm, the devotion, the service, and the sacrifice of a human being. It is no prison of the soul, shadowed by a varied assortment of glooms or chilled by a long procession of frosts. It is a king of the professions. It is more than a profession; it is a confession, it is a witness-bearer. It works at the springs of character. It hammers at the foundations of life. It grasps humanity round all its circumference and toils upwards with it toward God. It deals with the things that abide for ever. It stands ready to stay the hearts that have been broken and to whisper consolation into the ears of the dying. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

"This one thing I do."

We all know something about the effects of the Renaissance upon the modern world. Renaissance means re-birth, regeneration, resurrection if you like. The intellectual forces of the Middle Ages had spent themselves. A thick pall of ignorance rested on Roman Christendom. The learning, the literature, the very language of Greece had been forgotten in the West. The memory of Athens and its glorious achievements, the songs of its poets, the wisdom of its sages had been allowed to die out. But when, in the fifteenth century, Constantinople was captured by the Turks, many Greek scholars who had been working there had to flee to the shores of Italy bringing with them the poetry of Homer, the drama of Sophocles, the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, the forgotten science and art and scholarship of the ancient world. Weary of the barrenness of the Roman system, the world was ready for a revival of learning. The finest scholars gave themselves to the study of that great literature from the East. The result was the awaking of Europe from its death-

like sleep, and the stirring of a new life that is not yet exhausted.

If Italy rejoiced in the privilege of studying this literature with an artistic and literary appreciation, there were men in the more northerly nations who rejoiced for other reasons. The rediscovery of the ancient Greek language meant that at last the New Testament might be studied in its original tongue. In England the immediate recovery of Greek was Tyndale's translation of the New Testament, and in Germany, Luther's. Before this could be accomplished the rules and idioms of the language must be re-established. This involved no end of patient and laborious toil. The ancient manuscripts were often found to be in a very corrupt and defective state. To restore the text to anything like purity was a task which called for, and often baffled, the profoundest and subtlest learning. When we read our Bible and rejoice in its message of salvation, let us sometimes remember that behind its translation there lie the almost incredible exertions of the textual critic, the grammarian, the laborious classical scholar.

One modern scholar refers to them in this well-deserved tribute: "These men, little known outside the circumscribed world of learning, would spend years of research in settling some seemingly trifling philological points on which yet a great deal depended in deciding the meaning of an author;

they would toil away at these dry-as-dust problems which the men in the street did not so much as dream the existence of, and of whose importance you certainly could not persuade the average money-making or moneyed citizen. In their devotion to pure scholarship—nay, in their devotion to truth—the grammarian, the critic, the philologist, would toil on, content to be unknown and scantily rewarded, content if by their utmost efforts they had made some small contribution to the sum of knowledge."

If the world ever hears of such people it is inclined to shrug its shoulders in pitying disdain. They are looked upon as queer, unpractical mortals, given up to objects that have no earthly use. Why should they not make money and enjoy the good things of life, and taste pleasure and fame and popularity, instead of grinding away at their dusty pursuits? It remained for the great mind and soul of Robert Browning to choose one of these devotees of learning as one of his types of the heroic life. The Renaissance was an epoch that marvellously fascinated the mind of Browning, who had ever held that all hope for man lay in the full use of his powers, in his unstinted energy and unwearying toil. Little wonder that he saw an example of the life worth while and that he brought out all the grandeur of his character in the hero of

the poem we are to study, *A Grammarian's Funeral.*

In a little town where he had spent his years during the period of the Renaissance, some laborious scholar has died. He had scarcely been known except to a few students. He had been consumed by the desire for learning, greedy for the very crumbs of scholarship and fearful lest they should fall to the ground and be trodden under foot of men. In his devotion to learning he had kindled a flame of loving veneration in the hearts of his students and inspired them with an appreciation of high ideals. And now these students are taking his body to the burial. Where shall they lay it?

> Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
> Singing together.
> Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes,
> Each in its tether,
> Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
> Cared-for till cock-crow:
> Look out if yonder be not day again
> Rimming the rock-row!
> That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
> Rarer, intenser,
> Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
> Chafes in the censer.

As they carry his body up the mountain-side they discuss the inner nature of the man. With enthusiasm they recall that unswerving devotion to

learning that brought their master none of the things men hold dear. They feel that one who during his lifetime had lived above the clods of the valley cannot be buried there. Only the very summit of the highest hill is a suitable place for the body in which his soaring spirit dwelt.

> Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:
> Wait ye the warning?
> Our low life was the level's and the night's:
> He's for the morning.
> Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
> 'Ware the beholders!
> This is our master, famous calm and dead,
> Borne on our shoulders.

Before we proceed further we wish to call attention to something which Dr. Warschauer points out with a fine emphasis. We need not infer that Browning was blind to the limitations of the Grammarian. It was but natural that his students with the instinct for hero-worship, which is never very discriminating, should glorify his defects until they became virtues. Not so with the creator of *Pippa,* of *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* and a host of other noble characters. He knew that life should have a wider outlook than Greek particles and dusty manuscripts. The students are loud in their praise of one who toiled on until he was a physical wreck, of how still, "with the throttling hands of death at strife, ground he at grammar"; how he settled one philological point when he was already "dead

from the waist down". The world might ask, "Was it not futile?" But the students ask, "Was it not great?" It was not the part of greatness to neglect his body and his sense of beauty and his affections, to fix the right interpretation of Greek idioms. But it was the part of greatness to have a fixed purpose, to disdain ease, to take each day as a gift from the hand of God, to make paths along which other scholars should travel, to hold honourable obscurity better worth having than some kinds of fame. It is easy to see why Browning attributes real greatness to this old scholar and holds him up to admiration before the whole world.

For one thing, there is *absolute consecration to a worthy ideal.* What does a man stand for? That is the question that probes the real value attaching to him; because this shows how faithful he has been to the privilege of his humanity, and how much fellowship he has with God. We are not to ask, as this world asks, "How much is a man worth?" to get an answer in dollars. We are not to ask what the grade of his living is, the splendour of his house, the scale of his expenses, as though we could test in that way his essential value. We are not to measure his worth by plaudits and popularity. Browning himself must write for a small circle of people who make the effort to understand him. The spiritual method of finding what

a man is worth is to inquire what is the moral frame-work of his career, and what purpose he is living for. It is necessary to search for the central sentiment he lives by; to knock upon the substance of his soul and find whether he rings hollow, or if the music of some everlasting principle thrills out of him.

Every man does represent an ideal, a principle, either a mean one or a noble one, and by that he is estimated in the spiritual world. Now and then we see a human being, like the Grammarian, that is not so much obedient to a principle as the personification of a principle. We feel, for instance, that he not only tells the truth, but that he could not articulate a falsehood. His word is as good as his bond, for both are simply the pledges of his character. Such a man is incapable of putting anything—money or station or ease or fame—in comparison with an eternal verity, such as right, truth, the spirit of humanity. If he has money, he knows that he is not made up of money; that he is built up of brain, conscience, heart, and will; and that the only eternal value of his money lies in its being an implement of his nobler nature. If he is your friend, he is the friend of your nature, not of your purse, or house, or dinner-table. Misfortune only brings him closer to you, because there is less of this world's drapery to keep him from intimate communion with your heart.

Such men count all things as loss for the excellency of ideals. They have taken truth into their substance. These are the persons who really succeed in life because they fulfil the privilege of their humanity. They have their own aim and they work for the inner satisfaction of doing their best. They have no slothful habits, rusting usefulness away. Common actions are made to glow with the sparks of divine truth so that their value lies in their quality and not their scale. A man without such ideals, destitute of such principles, is poor, terribly poor. What difference does it make in his condition to say that he has stocks or bonds, he has a fine house, he has a luxurious table, he has a great name? I tell you he is miserably poor. He is to be pitied. Christ mourns for him. God yearns over him because he is penniless in his immortal nature. When the temptation comes to barter away truth or freedom for ease, or popularity or money, let us think of the Grammarian and we shall find his example both invigorating and helpful.

The second thing we learn from the Grammarian is *the importance of concentration for the production of lasting work and lasting results.* It takes a strong man to bring all his will and all his faculties to bear on the one piece of work he has in hand. I know of no poet who so consistently emphasises the value of resolute endeavour as

Browning. To put it in the language of another: "It is as if the poet considered that the qualities of strength, decision and resoluteness would in the long run work out a man's salvation, even though for the time they were misdirected, and that little or nothing was to be got out of a man naturally feeble and fickle and irresolute. Better have a character which compels you to go straight even for wrong than a character which allows you to drift in a half-hearted fashion. A man's deepest and most real self is his will; and the measure of its energy, power, and self-determining character is the measure of the worth of a man. The Grammarian burnt his way with fierce energy toward the end he had set before himself. This constitutes his greatness—not his knowledge of history or his proficiency in Greek grammar. He fought a good fight, not perhaps in the noblest of causes. His manner of fighting showed the man."

> Let a man contend to the uttermost
> For his life's set prize, be it what it will.

That characteristic is always the mark of true greatness. It was the greatness of Paul. "This one thing I do." The great apostle would have agreed with the saying of a French genius that "great souls are not those which have fewer passions and more virtue than common ones, but those only which have greater aims." Continually he points

out the need of a noble aim. He knows how prone men are to dissipate their powers, to fritter away their energy in futile activities, and both in himself and others he seeks to counteract the tendency. Get an object in life, he cries. Have a purpose. Find out what you can do best and bend your whole energy to that. "The great misfortune of my life," said Robert Burns, "was to want an aim." It is the great misfortune of thousands of lives. There is nothing in much of modern society which so impresses an observer as its apparent aimlessness. Here is a multitude of people whirling about in a breathless rush of incessant social engagements. What is the inner meaning of this feverish turmoil? Nobody knows. Here are others both energetic and busy. Their lives on the whole are virtuous, often useful. They go their rounds from day to day. But what are they tending to? What is the goal of their endeavour and their pleasure? No one can say. Here are still others whose labour shuts them up within the narrowest horizons. They, too, go through the daily round of plodding. But what are they working for beyond the bare supply of material necessities? Nobody knows.

What a contrast between these restless, aimless people and the apostle! Here is a man who starts right away with an object in life—something to strive for, something to achieve, something worth

achieving. The same thing is true of the Grammarian. He had one thing to do. That is the condition of moral health, a veritable means of grace. We may well be thankful if we are so placed that we have little choice but to be active. Concentration, exertion, the urgent necessity for employing our energies—that is God's appointed cure for care, the healing draught "which clears to-day from past regrets and future fears." There is nothing better for a man or woman than to have such a steady succession of healthy calls on their time and powers as will fill their days. We are meant to be doers, not mere lookers-on at life's spectacle. We are meant to discharge our debt and to justify our existence. So far from believing that labour was ordained by God as a punishment for man's disobedience, we rather agree with Browning that activity is in itself pleasurable. A man should contend to the uttermost for his life's set prize, but this he cannot do unless the prize is worth attaining and unless the motive is to render service to humanity.

A final thing we learn from the Grammarian is *the importance of faith.* Although this man's life lacked breadth and sympathy it was a life of faith —faith in something greater than self and the miserable aims that end in self. Consecration to an end, service of truth, is the door to this possession. Paul counted all temporal things as loss for

the excellency of Christ, and then he soon learned to see that they were beggarly indeed in comparison with what he gained. He gave up the prospect of being a priest in Jerusalem, and he saw the world as a temple over which God's sanctity ever broods, and in which every spirit may be a priest. What was the toil of tent-making and journeying which he underwent, compared with the ecstasy in which his new faith poised his spirit above the world? God bends a boundless sky over our heads, but he offers a deeper heaven, filled with more glorious lights and diviner promise, to all that will discard self for Him. The work of such will endure though his eyes should never see it. In time he will be working for eternity.

> Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
> (Hearten our chorus!)
> That before living he'd learn how to live—
> No end to learning:
> Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
> Use for our earning.
> Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes!
> Live now or never!"
> He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs
> and apes!
> Man has Forever."

In the light of this truth the man most worthy of condemnation is the man who sets his life towards the attainment of quick and cheap results. Unworthy is the man who refuses the great venture

of faith, who hugs the earth to make sure of that lest he should fail to attain to heaven.

> Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
> Heedless of far gain,
> Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
> Bad is our bargain!

There is great comfort here for all who share Browning's faith. You and I at the best can do but little. But if our aim is at something beyond ourselves, something that calls forth all the powers of the soul, then even though we should seem to accomplish little we can throw the responsibility on God to carry our task to completion. That, according to his disciples, was what the Grammarian did:

> Was it not great? Did not he throw on God
> (He loves the burthen)—
> God's task to make the heavenly period
> Perfect the earthen?

In all moods of despondency we can throw on God His task. In such a faith we can bear what men call failure. Here is the difference between high failure and low success.

> He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
> Found, or earth's failure:
> "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered
> "Yes!
> Hence with life's pale lure!"

That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.

And now the band of students have reached the summit of the mountain's topmost peak. In the spirit of their master's faith they bury him joyously. If he closed his eyes in the twilight he has opened them in the eternal dawn.

Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

"Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food convenient for me."

Jean Francois Millet was a painter of French peasant life. Competent critics assert that France has not produced in our day any greater or more original artist. He himself was a peasant, and the son of a peasant. He was reared in a peasant's home, and for long years laboured on the soil. He was born an artist without ancestry, nurtured by nature to be her interpreter, receiving inspiration from her alone. Until he was twenty-one she left him to hoe, and dig, and plough. Through these experiences he was to learn the hardness of the peasant's lot, and then he was to go forth to be the interpreter to his age of a new gospel of art, to be the painter of the peasant life and of the poetry of the soil.

It is no exaggeration to say that before Millet's day the peasant had been treated in art in the spirit of jocularity or caricature. He was painted as "the ignorant rustic dancing awkwardly on the village green," or the roisterous boor drinking deep in the village tavern. Of the labourer's intimate life, of the thoughts which occupied his mind, of

the joys and sorrows of his life, men knew nothing, and did not care to know. Then came one sent from God who knew the peasant's life, and who had in his heart the "cry of the earth". As Muther says in his *History of Modern Painting,* "Millet is not the first to paint peasants, but he is the first who has represented them truthfully, in all their ruggedness, and likewise in their greatness—not for the amusement of others, but as they claim a right to their own existence. The spirit of the rustic is naturally grave and heavy, and the number of his ideas and emotions is small. His life, which forces him to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, always reminds him of the hard fundamental conditions of existence. Even the earth he stands on wakens in him a mood of seriousness. It is gravely sublime, this nature with its wide horizon and its boundless sky. At certain seasons it wears a friendly smile, especially for those who have escaped for a few hours from town. But for him who always lives in its midst it is not the good, tender mother that the townsman fancies. It has its oppressive heats in summer and its winter frosts; its majesy is austere."

Millet was called to be the interpreter of this life which he knew so intimately. The titles of his pictures reveal his interest in the men and women among whom he was reared: *The Workman's Monday; The Gleaners, Potato Planters, The*

Reapers, The Man With The Hoe. In the last named picture the artist made no attempt to idealise his subject. The man with the hoe is clad in rough garb, with the marks of toil upon his bowed frame. Here, as in *The Angelus,* the pathetic spirit enters into Millet's art. He dwells upon the sense of the burdens and sorrows of the labourer's life. The blessing of work can be turned into a curse, when labour is incessant and unremunerative, and when it leaves no time for relaxation. It is not the dignity of labour, but its heavy, unremitting burden, which here is emphasized. Now this was the picture which appealed so powerfully to Edwin Markham that he wrote a poem with the same title—*The Man With The Hoe.*

> Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans
> Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
> The emptiness of ages in his face
> And on his back the burden of the world.
> Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
> A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
> Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
> Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
> Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
> Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

In reading that verse one cannot but feel how thoroughly the poet has interpreted the painter. It is this monotonous and irksome toil which

makes the toilers old before their time, which gives to laughter a bitter ring, which "turns the image of God into an ugly, misshapen, and rhuematic thing," which robs the heart of hope and the brain of light—it is this that agitates the soul of the artist and is reflected by the singer in his song. How strongly Millet felt the things he painted is revealed in a letter which he wrote to Sensier in 1851 and quoted by J. Burns in his *Sermons in Art*: "One sees a poor, heavily laden creature with a bundle of faggots advancing from a narrow path in the fields. The manner in which this figure comes suddenly before one is a momentary reminder of the fundamental conditions of human life—Toil! On the tilled land around one watches figures hoeing and digging. One sees how this or that one rises and wipes away the sweat with the back of his hand. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' Is that merry, enlivening work, as some people would like to persuade us? And yet it is here that I find the true humanity, the great poetry." But he did something more than find the true humanity and the great poetry; he made his generation see what he saw. "I open your eyes," he said, "to that which you do not perceive."

As Edwin Markham looked upon that picture of a man who had been made in the image of God and to have dominion over all things, and whose

body and soul had been warped by the everyday struggle with poverty, he was moved to utter words that burn with passionate indignation:

> Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
> To have dominion over sea and land;
> To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
> To feel the passion of Eternity?
> Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
> And pillared the blue firmament with light?
> Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
> There is no shape more terrible than this—
> More tongued with censure of the world's blind
> greed—
> More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
> More fraught with menace to the universe.

Markham sees something more in the picture than that which comes from the thought of the labourer's over-worked life. As he looked at the solitary figure of *The Man With The Hoe* he was moved with a sense of his sad limitations. It may be that the man himself is more or less satisfied in his ignorance, that he has "no luxuries to breed discontent," and no problems that agitate the more cultured mind. All this may be, but the poet cannot believe in such happiness any more than could the painter. Man was not meant to be a brother to the ox. It was intended that he should have his faculties developed and that his passion for knowledge should be satisfied. There is infinite pathos in the picture of a man stolid and stunned

even though he be contented with his lot. "That there should be one man die ignorant who had capacity for knowledge—this I call a tragedy!" says Carlyle. So also says Edwin Markham:

> What gulfs between him and the seraphim?
> Slave of the wheel of labour, what to him
> Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
> What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
> The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
> Through this dread shape, humanity, betrayed,
> Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
> Cries protest to the judges of the world,
> A protest that is also prophecy.

In Millet those dumb, neglected creatures like *The Man With The Hoe* at last found a voice. The man who uttered their protest through art was recognized as a prophet. Like every prophet of the first order he endured shame and ridicule until his message could be no longer neglected. He championed the cause of the downtrodden and called for a new reverence for humanity. Since his day that challenge has been forced upon every age. In our time it is not merely the problem of the peasant that faces us. It is the problem of the submerged and abandoned in our cities, the underfed and the overworked, the neglected waifs and unpitied progeny of the streets. This cry of God's poor must be heard. This challenge to modern society and the Christian Church cannot be

ignored. With absolute frankness and virile courage the poet hurls it forth.

> O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
> Is this the handiwork you give to God—
> This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
> How will you ever straighten up this shape;
> Touch it again with immortality;
> Give back the upward looking and the light;
> Rebuild it in the music and the dream;
> Make right the immemorial infamies,
> Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?
>
> O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
> How will the Future reckon with this Man?
> How answer his brute question in that hour
> When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?
> How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
> With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
> When this dumb terror shall reply to God,
> After the silence of the centuries?

Here is the knowledge of a great wrong. Here is the conviction that these neglected men and women have a right to the blessings of modern civilization. Here is the warning that the society that dooms them to slavery has insulted the God who made them and must accept the consequences.

In this poem many truths are suggested for our consideration. We shall have time to deal with but two. First of all, let us think about *the value of the common man.* This is distinctly religious teaching. The Bible never cheapens human life

be it ever so lowly. It is the people's book. It pleads their cause. It is the Magna Charta of their liberties. "The servant must not be defrauded in his wages." "The labourer is worthy of his hire." There must be no oppression of the widow and the fatherless. "Whatever ye would that others should do to you do ye even so to them." The socialism of the Bible is beautiful and ideal. It is unselfish, free from hardness, sordidness, vulgarity. It is truly humanitarian and full of the very grace of life. Wherever the Bible holds sway the people rise in intelligence, in independence, in industry, in the possession of themselves, in manhood, in personal resource, in largeness of soul.

The greatest lover of mankind once exclaimed, "How much better is a man than a sheep!" Of course he is better than a sheep. But he has not always been treated as better than a sheep. He too has been reckoned as part of the property, as belonging to the chattels of the state with no more rights or care than was given to sheep. But to Jesus man as man was infinitely precious. The gifted and those without gifts, the artist and the artisan, the man with the hoe and the man with vast estates—all were dear to Him. He who had a message for Nicodemus, with his culture and wealth, had a message for the man who sat at the toll bar, for the woman who was a sinner, and for the man who denied Him. All were dear to Him

—the meek, the poor, the bruised, the broken-hearted, the last, the least, the lost.

There are many signs that the valuation of man is approaching the revelation of Jesus. John Ruskin was never tired of insisting that man "is more precious than the gold of Ophir". That was his great protest and affirmation. What a noble passage is this! "In fact it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in rock but in flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed and happy-hearted human creatures. In some far-away and yet undreamt of hour I can even imagine that England may cast the thoughts of possessive wealth back to the barbaric nations among whom they first arose; and that while the sands of the Indus and the adamant of Golconda may yet stiffen the housings of the charger, and flash from the turban of the slave, she, as a Christian mother, may at last attain to the virtues and the treasures of a heathen one, and be able to lead forth her sons, saying, 'These are my jewels'."

It is only when the valuation of Jesus is set upon man that a nation moves forward in the onward march of humanity. It is so ordered that we cannot blacken another and remain white ourselves. To compromise another's conscience is to compromise our own. To jeopardize another's

future is to jeopardize our own. We cannot unjustly limit another's liberty and remain free within. We cannot crush another's hope and yet have hope towards God. Sin against the people is ever sin against God. The service of God is ever the service of the people. We can only value man when we look upon the seething crowds of human souls with the eyes of the Son of Man—the Man of men, Christ of the eternal sacrifice. From Him all things take their value. We must come back to Christ to value men and to save them.

> Give human nature reverence for the sake
> Of One who bore it, making it Divine
> With the ineffable tenderness of God:
> Let common need, the brotherhood of prayer,
> The heirship of an unknown destiny,
> The unsolved mystery round about us, make
> A man more precious than the gold of Ophir,
> Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things
> Should minister, as outward types and signs
> Of the eternal beauty which fulfils
> The one great purpose of creation—Love
> The sole necessity of earth and heaven.

A final thing our study leads us to is *the baneful effect of poverty*. To live starved and stunted, cramped in body and mind, to know filth and darkness and ugliness in mean and grimy streets, to toil incessantly at dull, monotonous labour, to be called free and feel yourself enchained, to endure penury amid a blaze of luxury, to pass your

days overwhelmed with care, baffled in a hopeless struggle to exist on less than a living wage, to labour truly through the best years of life and then to be cast aside upon the scrap-heap—can any society be called Christian that permits such destiny for men and women made in the image of God? Can such misery as that be the best environment for the growth of strong character and heavenly virtues? All human experience gives the answer. To expect goodness and purity and spirituality to flourish under such conditions is to expect the impossible. With all our glib talk about "the blessedness of poverty", we surely recognize that to treat human beings in a way we would not treat our horses and dogs is an unutterable shame and in the end, as Edwin Markham asserts, leads to social madness. Dire poverty as well as extreme luxury bars, save by moral miracle, entrance into the Kingdom of Christ. I like the way that fine eighteenth century Christian, Samuel Johnson, states it. "Poverty is a great evil. It destroys liberty. It makes some virtues impracticable, others extremely difficult."

Is the piling up of riches a legitimate calling for the followers of Christ? Is it enough to make money honestly providing we part with a small bit of it for the Church and the poor? Is it thoroughly Christian to devote our lives strenuously to acquisition, to adding freely to our com-

forts and luxuries, and dread, as Carlyle said, only one hell, the hell of not making money? Would it be an exaggeration to apply the words of the Emperor Hadrian in describing the people of Alexandria in the second century to the people of the twentieth? "They have but one God—money: it is he alone that Christians, Jews, and all the rest adore." Can any of us deny it? Almost to a man we desire wealth. How many of us would decline great riches if offered us, Christ's warnings notwithstanding? Respectable Christians by the thousands live in luxury and leave millions behind them when they die and no violent protests are heard. It makes us think of those peoples of Samaria of old, of whom it is written, "they feared the Lord *and served their own gods.*"

Into this unceasing, feverish struggle for luxury there came crashing like thunderbolts from heaven the words of the Son of Man:

> Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.
>
> A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.
>
> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth.
>
> How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Christ had more to say about money than about

any other subject. He knew that money is a factor in human development, a power in human history, a centre around which most of the thought and sentiment and ambition and activity of every generation has gathered. According to Jesus a man's character is revealed by his use of money. It is impossible to believe a man a true follower of Jesus whose expenditures on personal luxuries far exceeds his contributions to the uplift of the people and the redemptive programmes of humanity. We do really assess one another very much upon the principles that Christ laid down. We may envy the sumptuous living of Dives, but in our heart of hearts we feel him to be despicable. We have no desire to share the poverty of the widow with her solitary mite, but we recognize in her a nobility of temper which moves our hearts and wins our admiration. And Christ still sits over against the treasury, the grieved spectator of our folly, the glad rewarder of our generosity.

It is the teaching of Jesus that the best environment for our souls is neither poverty nor riches, but simple competence—that condition of life which He Himself consecrated by adopting it. We instinctively feel the sanity of Agur's prayer, that ancient sage whose epigrams are contained in the book of Proverbs: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who

is Jehovah? or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God." Can anyone doubt that if the spirit of that prayer were incorporated in modern life a Christian society would arise in harmony with the mind of Christ? In that society there will be neither rich nor poor. There will be no leisured class nor idle drones. Work shall be a joy not a curse. The luxuries of music and art and knowledge will be enjoyed by all. Vulgarity, ostentation, poverty, greed, material standards of happiness, all the qualities which make people unspiritual shall be swept away. I close by giving you the sane and beautiful philosophy of the hero of "V. V.'s Eyes". Dr. V. Vivian of the far-seeing eyes, the doctor of the Dabney House district, is addressing the mass meeting assembled to consider the needs of the poor:

"The things in which we are all alike are so much bigger than the things in which we are different. What's rich and poor to a common beginning and a common end, common sufferings, common dreams? We look at these big freeholds, and money in banks is a little thing. On Washington Street and down behind the Dabney House,—don't we each alike seek the same thing? We want life and more life. We want to be happy and we want to be free. Well—we know it's hard to win these prizes when we're poor, but is it so easy when

we're rich? To live shut off on a little island, calling the rest common and unclean—is that being happy and free, is it having life abundantly? I look around and don't find it so. And that's sad, isn't it?—double frustration, the poor disinherited by their poverty, the rich in their riches. Don't you think we shall find a common meeting place some day, where these two will cancel out? —when reality will touch hands with the poet's ideal:

> And the stranger hath seen in the stranger his
> brother at last,
> And his sister in eyes that were strange."

THE SCARLET LETTER

"I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

It is generally conceded that the American novelist, Nathaniel Hawthorne, deserves to rank with the great masters of fiction. He inherited much from the Puritan movement of New England. One thing for which the Puritan stood was a spiritual interpretation of the universe. He believed himself to be in direct contact and communication with the unseen spiritual forces which guide the world. He realized that he was not only a child of time but a pilgrim of eternity. These convictions were the dominant note of all Puritan thought. They are expressed in Milton's heroic sonnet on his blindness when he speaks of his solemn task

> To serve therewith my Maker and present my true account.

They are expressed in the great sayings of Cromwell; as, for instance, when he says "I do think the Lord is with me. I do feel myself lifted on by a strange force. I cannot tell why;" and when he says of human events, "What are all events but God working?"

Such was the temperament which Hawthorne inherited to the full. It is, in part, the explanation of a mind of peculiar depth, which brooded much over the secrets of personality. To it he added something which was rare in the Puritan temperament, something indeed that was historically hostile to it—the gift of the artist, "who is so far detached from life that he can analyse, review, and judge it." In speaking of Hawthorne, W. J. Dawson says: "He could understand the past and yet be sceptical of its conclusions. He sympathized, but he also criticized. This painful quality of scepticism is vital to the artist. But the more necessary is the interpretive sympathy, which comprehends modes of life and thought which the conscience no longer regards as authoritative. Hawthorne possessed all these characteristics, and it is in virtue of them that he became the greatest writer of fiction whom America has produced."

If Hawthorne is America's greatest novelist, it can likewise be asserted that *The Scarlet Letter* is his greatest novel. No one can read this moving tale without being impressed with the artistic restraint which characterises it. Here is a story that might easily have degenerated into something offensive to the moral sense had it not been told with Hawthorne's artistic gift. It opens in an old English town and in an old English home. We are introduced to the much respected father whose

fortune has vanished; to the mother, over-anxious for her family; and to the daughter who has just reached the age of womanhood. A man of wealth and years enters the home, offers to marry the daughter and repair the family misfortunes. Thus Hester Prynne becomes the wife of old Roger Chillingworth, a medical scientist, a cantankerous hermit of the study. He carried her off to a continental city where she found the loneliness almost unbearable. One day he placed her on a ship in Amsterdam and sent her to America, promising to follow later. In the new world she sought the consolation of the church and met a brilliant young clergyman, Arthur Dimmesdale, who had been trained in the greatest university of the Old Land. These two soon discover a mutual sympathy which passes rapidly into a mutual affection. "How fierce her hatred of that old man who had first deluded and then deserted her! What bitterness toward the parents who had done her so grievous a wrong! A thousand times, also, young Dimmesdale indicted that grim Puritanism that made marriage impossible for this deserted daughter of grace and beauty. A thousand times, too, he indicted Providence for cruelty in stretching forth to him the cup of joy only to withdraw it."

In the end, and after the birth of her child, exposure came. According to the customs of that severe Puritanical period Hester mounts the

scaffold in the market-place and proclaims herself an adulteress by wearing the scarlet letter "A". She insists on bearing her trouble alone. Stubbornly she refuses to publish the name of the father of her child. Against this determination Dimmesdale remonstrates in vain, and from his lips came the exclamation, "Oh, wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart!" And then Roger Chillingworth appears upon the scene. He soon discovers the truth about his wife and immediately sets himself the agreeable task of finding out the paternity of her child. "A creeping horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake riding over them." In the meantime Dimmesdale writhes in the pangs of remorse. If conscience has made a coward of him it also whips him with a lash. He can bear the strain no longer. His health gives way. Chillingworth, in disguise as a medical man, is called to attend the young minister. Once under his roof the physician becomes suspicious. Giving his patient a sleeping draught, he finds that the same scarlet letter publicly worn by Hester has been branded by remorse upon the minister's heart. "Had a man seen old Roger Chillingworth at that moment of ecstasy," says Hawthorne, "he would have had no need to ask how Satan deports himself when a precious soul is lost to heaven and won into his community."

And now he hounds his victim. "He became

the chief inquisitor in that torture chamber named the sufferer's heart. Every morning for a few minutes he stretched his victim upon the rack. Every evening he lifted his hand, and by suggestions caused a thousand ghastly phantoms of death to rise up and point their fingers at his heart." But all this he was able to bear more easily than the scourge of conscience. As if to find relief he told his congregation that his heart was black with iniquity and that his life was a perpetual lie. At other times he plied his shoulders with a bloody scourge. Many times he resolved to listen to Hester no longer and to make a public confession. Finally he mustered resolution for that humiliating act.

That dramatic scene took place in the marketplace of Salem, where Hester had proclaimed her sin. He had preached the sermon in connection with the installation of a new governor recently appointed, and with such eloquence and power that the people marvelled. When the ceremony was over he summoned Hester and their child to his side and mounted the scaffold. Seeing his intention and knowing that a public confession would take him out of his hands, Chillingworth sprang forward, whispering: "Madman! what doest thou? All shall be well. I can yet save you. Do not bring infamy upon your sacred profession." Dimmesdale replied, "Tempter, thou art too late;

with God's help I will escape thee." To which the heartless inquisitor answered, "In all the world there was no place so secret—no high place nor lowly place where thou couldst have escaped me —save this scaffold."

There in the presence of the people he revealed his soul: "At last!—at last—I stand upon the spot where seven years since I should have stood. Lo the scarlet letter which Hester wears! Ye have all shuddered at it. Wherever her walk hath been, —wherever, so miserably burdened, she may have hoped to find repose,—it hath cast a lurid gleam of awe and horrible repugnance round about her. But there stood one in the midst of you, at whose brand of sin and infamy ye have not shuddered! It was on him! God's eye beheld it! The angels were for ever pointing at it! The devil knew it well, and fretted it continually with the touch of his burning finger! But he hid it cunningly from men, and walked among you with the mien of a spirit, mournful because so pure in a sinful world!—and, sad, because he missed his heavenly kindred! Now, at the death-hour he stands up before you! He bids you look again at Hester's scarlet letter! He tells you that with all its mysterious horror, it is but the shadow of what he wears on his own breast, and that even this, his own red stigma, is no more than the type of what has seared his inmost heart! Stand any here that

question God's judgment on a sinner? Behold! behold a dreadful witness of it!"

"With a convulsive motion he tore away the ministerial band from before his breast. It was revealed!" His confession ended, he dies upon the scaffold. The curtain rings down upon the scene with old Roger Chillingworth crying in his ears, "Thou hast escaped me! Thou hast escaped me!" It is impossible to read this book without feeling that here we have a great dramatic rendering of a sombre theme.

The first obvious lesson we draw from Hawthorne's story is *the power of an awakened conscience*. To fall into its hand is one of the most terrific experiences in life. Arthur Dimmesdale might have gone to jail with a clear conscience and enjoyed some happiness. But he may be out of jail, he may even be a respected minister of the Church surrounded by admiring friends, and be truly wretched because of a voice within him that refuses to be silenced. History abounds with illustrations of this truth. Newell Dwight Hillis reminds us of the judge, famous in English story. It became his duty to sentence a servant for murdering his master. Suddenly, to the amazement of the onlookers, the judge arose and stood beside the prisoner in the dock. He told how years before he had done a similar thing with his master. First he had taken his property and then his life.

Through all the years that intervened he had had no peace. He now called upon his fellow judges to pass the sentence of death to which his conscience had urged him. Dr. Hillis recalls also the story of Professor Webster, endungeoned for the murder of Dr. Parkman. One morning he sent for his jailer and asked him to be placed in another cell. "At midnight," he said, "the prisoners in the next cell tap on the wall and whisper 'Thou art a murderer'." Now there were no prisoners in the next cell. What he heard was the voice of an offended conscience.

All Scripture is full of the same teaching. The sinner may hide himself in vain amid the garden trees, but the accusing voice follows him and asks "Where art thou?" A brother man has been murdered and it asks, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" The sinner has stolen what is not his own, and it convicts him with the accusation, "Tell me now what thou hast done." He has sent some father's only daughter out from underneath the shadow of his sin to tread the lonely way of the world, and it cries with uplifted voice and threatening finger, "Thou art the man!" As in the Old Testament, so in the New. Herod had been guilty of a shameful marriage. John the Baptist had denounced him, and Herod had brought about John's death. Later there came stealing into the seclusion of his palace the tidings of another

peasant teacher that had risen up among the people. Who is this strange teacher? was the question upon everybody's lips. Each man had his own theory about Him but Herod said "It is John whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead!" The voice of conscience would not let him forget.

To the Scripture we might easily add the voices that speak through the world's great literature. Here is Tennyson saying:

> A silent court of justice in himself,
> Himself the judge and jury, and himself
> The prisoner at the bar ever condemned,
> And that drags down his life.

Here is the great poet-philosopher, Lucretius, saying: "The scourge, the executioner, the dungeon, the pitchy tunic,—even though these be absent, yet the guilty mind with anticipating terror applies the goad, and scorches with its blows."

Here is Shakespeare in *Richard the Third*:

> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.

That which Shakespeare does for us in this and other plays Victor Hugo does in his *Les Misérables*. Nathaniel Hawthorne joins with them in urging that nothing is more awful than the lashings of an outraged and awakened conscience and that

nothing in the end brings happiness and character as does obedience to the soul's inner voice. Conscience may upbraid and denounce, it may torture with the pangs of regret, and torment in the burning hell of remorse, but it is always our friend leading us toward light and peace.

Another truth to which our story points us is *the necessity of confession.* Confession reveals a consciousness of sin. In the absence of this we have no confession to make. Of course it is possible to go to church and join the general confession with as little contrition in the heart as when singing "Rule Brittania". There will be no genuine confession without the acknowledgment of sin as a fact of consciousness. The publican in the temple knew that as he cried "God be merciful to me a sinner." Paul knew it when he called himself the "chief of sinners" and "the wretched man." Augustine knew it, and penned his amazing "confessions". Luther knew it and lay upon the stone floor of his cell groaning, "My sins! My sins!" The language of to-day may be different but the fact is the same. Any minister of the Gospel who is "confessor" to burdened souls is told of "awful mistakes", and cruel lies, of shameful impurity, of unfaithfulness to husband or to wife, of young people playing the fool, of sins of temperament and sins of social attitude and sins of neglect. The modern world has need to experience

the truth of the promise, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive."

Genuine confession is followed by forgiveness. If sin is a fact of consciousness so, equally, is forgiveness. God's free grace and forgiveness are real, not merely because they are declared in Scripture or in creeds, but because they are eternal facts of the divine nature which any human soul may experience. We know that we have found freedom from the sense of sin, joy in union with God, peace through forgiveness. We know it because it is witnessed within, not because some preacher has told it or because we have read in a book that such experiences might be ours. We know what that man meant when he said "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

We are also impressed with the necessity of forgiveness. Think again of Arthur Dimmesdale, with his secret sin, unconfessed, unatoned for, unforgiven. What shall he do to get rid of it? He is a man of intellect and will immerse himself in intellectual tasks; but of no avail. He is a minister; he will preach great sermons to the admiration of his people; but of no avail. There is only one way out—penitence, confession, forgiveness.

And that is a costly way. This is what Christianity has always meant when it associated

forgiveness with the cross. A recent man of letters, himself a degenerate, but with a conscience rendered impressionable by his own consciousness of wrong, tells us how in jail on the night when a murderer was to be executed that man's crime weighed on his fellow prisoners:

> He lay as one who lies and dreams
> In a pleasant meadow land,
> The watchers watched him as he slept,
> And could not understand
> How one could sleep so sweet a sleep
> With a hangman close at hand.
>
> But there is no sleep when men must weep
> Who never yet have wept;
> So we—the fool, the fraud, the knave—
> That endless vigil kept,
> And through each brain on hands of pain
> Another's terror crept.
>
> Alas! it is a fearful thing
> To feel another's guilt!
> For right within, the sword of sin
> Pierced to its poisoned hilt,
> And as molten lead were the tears we shed
> For the blood we had not spilt.

It makes one think of Jesus who was numbered with the transgressors. It makes us think of His love putting itself in our place. There is always a cross at the centre of forgiveness, and it is not easy.

The Scarlet Letter is a story of sin. Sin is a grim word, but it is also a hopeful word. I would rather have it than the word necessity, or fate, or heredity, or a good many others that are sometimes substituted for it. Mr. Chesterton somewhere says that the doctrine of sin is the logical basis of optimism, and his daring paradox is a mighty truth. Sin means something abnormal, something unnecessary, something out of joint with the final purpose of God, something which may beset the pilgrim but which was never meant to be the goal. As Christians we cannot stop where Hawthorne stopped. Sin is a disease to be cured. It is an enemy to be fought with. It is an intruder to be cast out. So this grim word is the gateway to infinite possibility. It is a finger-post pointing to Christ. There are in the last resort only two stages in a man's spiritual education: the first is sin, and the second is Christ, and he who understands sin understands Christ; he who feels the reality of sin is ready to receive the reality of forgiveness. Let this grim story lead us to that Gospel and in the strength of it let us take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

"For the good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

The mother of Robert Louis Stevenson, when asked to inscribe a motto on a guest list, wrote:

> The world is so full of a number of things,
> I am sure we should all be happy as kings.

"That", she said, "includes the whole gospel of R.L.S." These lines are certainly a concise statement of the spirit in which her son undertook to expound the benefits to be derived from "performing our petty round of irritating concerns and duties with laughter and kind faces". His central doctrine is the duty of being cheerful and brave. Happiness is to be sought for not so much for itself but because you thus act in accordance with the best law of your nature and of the universe. Happiness may be attained even in suffering.

But it is one thing to utter heroic sentiments; it is another to put them into execution. How far did R. L. S. act up to his theory of life? Did he falter in his great task of happiness? Was he brave in the face of difficulties? All the world knows the answer. From first to last he was never

well for any time. He was a delicate child, a sickly youth, an infirm man. His sickness was of a chronic nature, and of the most distressing and discouraging kind. There were long days in bed. This lover of the woods and fields could not visit or enjoy them. He travelled much in search of health, but the very travel was sometimes a confinement. The great bulk of his work was done under those most unfavorable conditions. He wrote and toiled incessantly, and whenever he was physically able. He was not morose or peevish. His interest in the life of the world and the life of others was ever keen and friendly. You discover in him a great strength of character; a great purpose running through all his years.

While it is true that the main thing he did was the sending forth of that gospel of the healthy mind, of which Professor William James has been so able an expositor, it is also true that you find in him an essential complexity, a collocation of opposites near his heart. This explains much. To every close student of Stevenson that double personality is very evident, and the *Jekyll* and *Hyde* story is but the most strongly drawn of many such portraitures in his works. It was *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* however, that first brought him fame. It made a great sensation. It is an allegory written in the form of a story that

has been played in theatres and preached in churches.

The story of the book centres around a certain Dr. Jekyll. At the time he appears upon the scene he is a man who has won name and position. He came by these honestly, for he was by nature a man with excellent parts, besides which he was a man of great industry. He was wealthy, learned, and of good standing both as a scientist and physician. It was this brilliant and benevolent gentleman whom the world knew. But this was not all there was of him. He was constituted with a very pronounced dual nature. The other part was evil, diabolically cruel, sensual, delighting in ugly and debasing pleasures. In order to maintain his reputation as a physician, he had to conceal his self-indulgences from the world. In short he was a man who lived a pronounced double life.

We have already noted that he was famous as a scientist. During his laboratory experiments he discovered a potion by which he was able to give expression to the evil personality within him in a separate identity. This combination of drugs possessed "the power of shaking and plucking back the fleshly vestment in which he habitually lived, just as the wind might toss aside the curtains of a pavilion." Late one night he drank the magic tincture. The most racking pains followed: "a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror

of spirit." When the agonies ceased he was aware of something new in his sensations. He felt younger in body but more reckless and sensual in mind. With it all he was shrunken in figure, deformed in build, and so ugly in appearance as to create aversion and disgust in those who came into contact with him. This changed identity expressed the evil principle within him, and to it he gave the name of Edward Hyde. Naturally, he did not remain long in this role. All he had to do was to drink another potion, which resulted in his return to the character and face and stature of Dr. Jekyll.

For a time he exulted in his discovery. When the craving for sensual pleasure was strong upon him, he could immediately place himself beyond the recognition of his friends by becoming Edward Hyde. When he had his fill of such pleasure, he could once more become Dr. Jekyll, the distinguished scientist quietly carrying on experiments in his laboratory. Soon, however, Edward Hyde was not satisfied with the pleasures which at first thrilled him. He degenerated in wickedness and villainy. He was pleasantly stirred by the torture of another. He did deeds that made Dr. Jekyll shudder. He deceived himself with the belief that each time he returned from his experiences as Edward Hyde unimpaired.

One morning a gentleman saw a shrunken and

repulsive individual, in clothes much too large for him, collide with a little girl at the corner of the street and with such force that the child was knocked down. With a brutal leer the man proceeded on his way, stepping on the prostrate form of the child and leaving her screaming on the ground. The girl's screams quickly drew the attention of the few pedestrians within reach. The man was collared and brought back to the scene of his brutality, and threatened with quick vengeance unless he paid handsomely to the child's family. With a snarling smile, the fiend consented to the arrangement and asked leave to write a check. The check was correct as to amount, but the signature was that of the highly respected physician, Dr. Jekyll. Naturally the world began to take note of the man who called himself Edward Hyde and to feel sorry for the good doctor who had evidently accepted him as protegé or friend.

More serious things soon followed. A prominent statesman had been attacked on the sidewalk and clubbed to death with a walking cane. All the evidence pointed to Edward Hyde as the culprit but that gentleman had disappeared. Through different similar deeds we have the amazing picture of one man with two personalities—now delighting in reading religious books, and now writing blasphemous comments on the borders of the pages;

now engaged in deeds of charity, and now taking a hellish delight in murder. It is not necessary to follow the story into detail. This stern lesson upon the enslaving power of evil culminates in tragedy for Dr. Jekyll. His higher nature had been violated so often that the transformation was made without his wishing for it. "I sat in the sun on a bench, the animal within me licking the chops of memory; the spiritual side a little drowsed, promising subsequent penitence, but not yet moved to begin." He fell asleep and waked in the form of Hyde. He tried to convince himself that he was mistaken but in vain. It dawned upon him that the power of voluntary change had been forfeited and that the character of Hyde would become irrevocably his.

Knowing that his doom was impending, he was consumed with fever and tortured with images of terror. To cap it all, his supply of the drug ran out. Shut up in his laboratory, with his good nature entirely controlled by that evil personality to whom he gave the dominion, suffering indescribable anguish, he mixed a draught of poison and committed suicide. Thinking that the murderer, Hyde, was concealed within the room, the friends of Dr. Jekyll broke through the door. "We have come too late, whether to save or punish. Hyde is gone to his account, and it only remains for us to find the body of Dr. Jekyll." But alas!

that contorted wretch was all that was left of Jekyll. He had indulged his evil passions and evil had in the end become dominant and triumphant.

It is easy to see why I have connected Stevenson's story with Paul's great statement in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Indeed, Stevenson frankly asserts that he had that description of our dual nature in mind when he wrote. He said, "Jekyll is a dreadful thing, I own, but the only thing that I feel dreadful about is that damned old business of the war in the members." Recently a distinguished psychoanalyst wrote: "If St. Paul had come to me I could have helped him." Of course he meant that he would have enabled the Apostle to understand and classify and then dispose of the discord in his personality. Just how much he could have helped him we do not profess to know, but we do profess to know that Paul's piece of psychological analysis is universally true. When he said "The good that I would I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do," he was laying bare the hearts of all men. His portrait of himself is the portait of man. William James described it thus: "The general basis of all religious experience is the fact that man has a dual nature, and is connected with two spheres of thought, a shallower and a profounder sphere, in either of which he may learn to live more habitually."

Let us spend a moment over this description of

human life. To state it briefly, *it is a description of the divided self.* Man is not a simple but a complex creation. Two desires may fight for mastery in the heart at one and the same time. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde may contend for the mastery. A man may never lose his longings for the pure and holy, and yet be swept by passion towards the base and impure. It is not necessary to lengthen that description, for every man who has any insight into his own nature will recognize it as true. The deepest desires of a man's nature may be crying out for the good at the very moment when his steps are moving far astray. We may use old names or new names to describe it, but the character of it is unchanging. We may talk about original sin, as the old orthodox theologian did, or we may use the phraseology of modern psychology and call it a complex. We may use the language that F. W. H. Myers put in the mouth of Paul,

> O the regret, the struggle and the failing!
> O the days desolate, and the useless years!
> Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing,
> Stings of my shame, and passion of my tears;

or we may prefer the more popular rhyme of the English soldier:

> Our Padre, 'e says I'm a sinner,
> And John Bull, 'e says I'm a saint;
> And they're both of 'em bound to be liars,
> For I'm neither of 'em, I aint.

I'm a man, and a man's a mixture,
Right down from his very birth;
And part of 'im comes from 'eaven,
And part of 'im comes from earth.

It makes little difference what terms are employed; the reality described is the same.

In view of this reality it is difficult to be patient with a certain glib hopefulness which asserts that we are going to leave it behind as an error exposed and as a lower stage in our development. Where are the signs that we are outgrowing sin? Where are the hints that its grip is weakening? By what process of reasoning do men declare that better circumstances or higher knowledge or comfort or wealth ensure a freedom from the struggle? Are the rich so wonderfully good? Are all clever people saints? Are those who live in comfortable circumstances saved from moral infirmities? Why should modern writers imagine themselves among "the intellectuals" when they talk so irresponsibly and think in this slovenly fashion? Why are they satisfied with easy phrases that roll well off the tongue and have no relation whatever to things as they are?

Surely our Lord's coming on earth has been in vain if it has failed to open our eyes to the seriousness of the sins which belong to our higher manhood. When we speak of sin we usually have in our imagination a list of fleshly transgressions—

the sins of Mr. Hyde. How much more prevalent are the sins of temperament and how much more hidden spiritual evil they reveal than even the sins of passion. The sins of the will and the sins of pride, envy, selfishness, bad temper, vindictive jealousy, self-conceit, the perverted conscience, the sins connected with money-getting; these are the sins seated in the reason, rooted in the innermost heart of man. They baffled Jesus far more than the sins which had their seat in the lower man, in the flesh, in the passions. Publican and harlot He could win over to the Kingdom of Heaven before He could hope to touch Pharisee and scribe. As we go back into ourselves and discern the deep roots of evil we recognize the sanity of such a saying as this: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

We agree, then, with Paul's interpretation of the facts, but let us proceed to note *the conclusion he draws from these facts.* "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That is a queer kind of statement, is it not? If I do a thing I do not want to do, it is not I who do it but someone or something else! It seems at first sight as though it contained an element of cowardice. Surely a man has no right to disown responsibility for the evil he has done. Is there either right or reason on his side when he shifts the responsibility for his failures to the sin

which dwelleth in him? Does it not seem as though these words were a mere flimsy excuse? "It was no longer I that did the evil"—does not that appear like a cowardly retreat from the facts, like a shrinking before the unwelcome truth? On the contrary I make bold to assert that this is not retreat from the facts, but a courageous interpretation of them, not the occasion of laxity, but the inspiration of a higher endeavour.

Any record of man's sin that we may draw does not give the final word. It does not by itself pass true judgment on what man is. In his radical self man is good—good in nature, good in design, good in construction, good in idea, good in possibility. He is only himself when he is good. "God saw what He had made, and, behold, it was very good." The evil that he produces is no natural part of his being as it was created. Rather it is a violence done in him; it is a perversion of what he is; it is alien and unnatural; it breaks the inner law which is his life and violates every purpose for which he was created. This was the idea of Jesus. What was the beginning of better things for the prodigal in the far country? He has spent all and is in misery. While everything was light he was in darkness. Now that the outward world is dark the light flashes in the inward world of the spirit. Jesus tells us "he came to himself". "To himself" —and in that moment he knew there was a self

which had never left home, which had never been satisfied with the far country—to that self he came back, and when he knew himself he came at once to his father's house.

What I am insisting upon is that the self or spirit of man is essentially good because it is an expression of the eternal life of God Himself. If in its manifestations it becomes sinful, if Dr. Jekyll becomes Mr. Hyde, it is because this self has yielded to conditions which produce evil unless they are resisted and overcome. Sir Oliver Lodge declares that his psychological experiments have led him to the conclusion that there is far more of every individual which never emerges into consciousness than which does. All individual self-consciousness, he said, is but a fragment of what that individual really is—a tiny island which is really the summit of a mountain which descends for many thousands of feet below the surface of the ocean and at the bottom becomes one with all the land on the globe. Even so our self-consciousness at any time is but a poor, limited expression of what we really are, and if we could get down far enough into the subconscious depths of our being we should find ourselves one with all the rest of existence and with God, Who is the ground thereof. Man was not made for sin. He was made for other things. Sin cannot be assimilated into a healthy frame. To sin is to be in exile; to sin is to be far

from home. "If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

We must say one thing more before we conclude. Stevenson ends his story on the note of tragedy. Edward Hyde triumphs over Dr. Jekyll. "As I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end." With Paul there is another and far happier ending. The conflict within his divided heart ends in *the triumph of the good.* He cries "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Is there anything which will reinforce the good within him and turn the whole current of his being upward? He answers by asserting that there is such a divine reinforcement and that it can gain the victory over the strongest desires of his lower self. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation—no moral ruin—to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

This is absolutely and gloriously true. It has been demonstrated millions of times in the experience of mankind. By surrendering to Jesus we cause the true self to rise in power in our souls, to free us from the bondage of flesh and sense, and to carry us upward to our eternal source and goal. Every impulse of our being, when rightly used, is

a force which will lead life to sovereign power. A live electric wire is useful when insulated and in its proper place. It will drive our engines and light our homes. But down in the mud of a busy street it will spread devastation and work ruin. Then it becomes necessary to find someone strong enough and wise enough to shut it off at the dynamo and turn the current into other channels. Even so does Christ liberate our true self-hood and restore us to the line of the spiritual development God has marked out for us. Here is the way of salvation —coming to oneself and bringing that self into union with Christ whose power enables us to prevail. Here is the gospel of redemption. In Christ we have power to become children of God, which is but another way of saying the power to become our true selves.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
Freely let me take of Thee!

THE EVERLASTING MERCY

"I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy."

Not since Francis Thompson wrote *The Hound of Heaven* has there been a more important addition to religious poetry than John Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy*. Here we have the vital portrait of a man, the drama of a great spiritual conquest, many passages of high beauty, as well as a psychological document of surpassing interest. The reader must be prepared for robustness of speech beyond the ordinary, for Masefield reproduces the actual language of the characters depicted, and has a very vivid way of calling a spade a spade. At the same time the reader will be forced to think inspiring thought; he will be stirred with strange emotions; he will be left with a fresh appreciation of the wonderful capacity of human nature to receive new influences and atone for seemingly ineradicable wrongs. Above all he will be reassured concerning the possibility of the chief of sinners being saved by the everlasting mercy of the Lord.

The story is the autobiography of Saul Kane, drunkard, gambler, poacher, swearer, rake. The keynote is struck in the first dozen lines:

From '41 to '51
I was my folk's contrary son;
I bit my father's hand right through
And broke my mother's heart in two.
I sometimes go without my dinner
Now that I know the time I've gi'n her.
From '51 to '61
I cut my teeth and took to fun.
I learned what not to be afraid of
And what stuff women's lips are made of;
I learned with what a rosy feeling
Good ale makes floors seem like theceiling,
And how the moon gives shiny light
To lads as roll home singing by't.
My blood did leap, my flesh did revel,
Saul Kane was tokened to the devil.

If this was a black beginning, it was only prophetic of what was to follow: a youth and early manhood given over to drinking, gambling, fighting, low debauchery, an early and repeated acquaintance with the inside of gaol. Coupled with all this was a blatant unbelief in everything high and holy, and a ruthless resolve to drink the cup of evil to the dregs. By the time Saul Kane reaches the age of twenty-five he is the terror of the little English town in which he lived; he is the ringleader of its most abandoned elements; he is shunned by all decent folk; he brings disgrace upon little children if they are seen in his presence; he becomes identified by such nicknames as "poacher Kane" or "boozer Kane". Early in the

poem we are told how he came to quarrel with Billy Myers, a fellow poacher who accused him of having set traps in the territory that he had first pre-empted. Kane brazened out his lying claim until the quarrel issued in a prize fight, described with marvellous vividness. His former friend was beaten but by unfair means. Both before and after the fight something of conscience stirred in Kane's darkened bosom. He would have called off the contest but for false shame and the fear of being taunted by his backers with being afraid of his opponent:

> They'd backed me, see? O Lord, the sin
> Done for the things there's money in.
> . . . . . .
> And, looking round, I felt a spite
> At all who'd come to see me fight;
> The five and forty human faces
> Inflamed by drink and going to races,
> Faces of men who'd never been
> Merry or true or live or clean.
> . . . . . .
> While we whom Jesus died to teach
> Fought round on round, three minutes each.

After he had won the bout—won it, feeling sick with himself and ill at ease—the company adjourned to the public house and to a scene of such vile revelry as makes one fairly choke in reading. Under the spell of Masefield's descriptive powers one fancies he is breathing the very atmosphere of

that unspeakable orgy. There followed three hours of sheer, unrestrained bestiality, in which not one element of shame was missing. And then, while the rest of the drunken company are asleep at or under the table, comes a first reaction. Saul gets up for a breath of fresh air—

> I opened windows wide and leaned
> Out of that pigstye of the fiend
> And felt a cool wind go like grace
> About the sleeping market-place.
> The clock struck three, and sweetly, slowly,
> The bells chimed Holy, Holy, Holy.

Somehow at this juncture there came into Saul Kane's mind the distinct impression that this kind of life was totally unworthy. What would be the end of it all, anyhow?

> A keeper's gun? The Union ward?
> Or that new quod at Hereford?
> . . . . . .
> What with the fight, and what with the drinking,
> And being awake alone there thinking,
> My mind began to carp and tetter,
> "If this life's all, the beasts are better."

And for one moment he had an almost irresistible desire to throw himself out of the window and end it all.

Soon another impulse seizes him. He becomes conscious of a sudden hatred of himself, of his companions, and of all the narrow stunted life in

that little town. He decides to give the inhabitants the fright of their lives. Thus he runs into the street, furiously rings the firebell in the middle of the night, and then careers along smashing glass, dealing terrific blows at all the gates, shouting that he is Satan let loose from hell, and that the end of the world has come, and the judgment is at the door. I must not linger to describe how he executes this furious exploit, how he is pursued by the townspeople, who, in their terror, fail to recognize this naked lunatic; how he outdistances his pursuers, makes good his escape, and returns at last exhausted to the public house, which again shelters him. In all of this the poet is impressing us with the fact that this whole mad enterprise merely reveals the unrest within Kane's soul. We are made to feel that his nature is in uproar, his equilibrium shaken. His unrighteous quarrel with his friend, the unfair way in which he won the fight, the filthy debauch that followed—it all has eaten into him and made him discontented with himself and his manner of life.

When the new day dawns it seems to find him much the same as before. He is seized with the desire to continue his pranks in the street.

> Out into street I ran uproarious
> The devil dancing in me glorious.

He has a wordy encounter with the village parson,

and supplies that worthy gentleman with such an outside view of himself as he has probably never received in his life. He points out inconsistencies in Christianity, in the Church and in the existing social state, and does it in singularly unvarnished language. In his reply to this brag of infidelity, one feels that the old parson does not come off second best. I quote a portion of it:

> You think the Church an outworn fetter;
> Kane, keep it, till you've built a better.
> And keep the existing social state;
> I quite agree it's out of date,
> One does too much, another shirks,
> Unjust, I grant; but still . . . it works. . . .
>
> Then, as to whether true or sham
> That book of Christ, Whose priest I am;
> The Bible is a lie, say you,
> Where do you stand, suppose it true?
> Good-bye. But if you've more to say,
> My doors are open night and day.
> Meanwhile, my friend, 'twould be no sin
> To mix more water in your gin.

Saul Kane felt the parson had the best of the argument:

> So, blazing mad, I stalked to bar,
> To show how noble drunkards are,
> And guzzled spirits like a beast,
> To show contempt for Church and priest.

At nightfall something happened that made him realize with a torturing acuteness what he had

done with his life. It all occurred through his yielding to a friendly impulse—giving a pear to a little lad whom he found in the streets. When the boy's mother finds her child in the market-place in the company of Kane, she snatches him away as if she were rescuing him from the plague, and turns upon the man with a fury of bitterness that fairly sweeps him off his feet. It is a terrific indictment. This mother has seen children of her own go to the bad through Saul Kane and such as he. To see him touch her youngest arouses her fury. In lines that alternately sob and burn and sting she shows him how he has made his life a curse.

> Summat she was, or looked, or said,
> Went home and made me hang my head.
> I slunk away into the night
> Knowing deep down that she was right.
> I'd often heard religious ranters,
> And put them down as windy canters,
> But this old mother made me see
> The harm I done by being me.
> Being both strong and given to sin
> I 'tracted weaker vessels in.

Dispirited and depressed, he goes back to the bar once more and spends the evening among his boon companions, partly from habit, partly to recover his good humour. In this he does not succeed. But just here occurs an incident which was full of destiny for him. Into that bar comes Miss Bourne, the Quaker, on her usual mission to

drunkards. No one ever used foul language before her. But that night Kane, with a last effort of his lower nature, greeted her with vile and disgusting taunts.

> The men stood dumb as cattle are,
> They grinned, but thought I'd gone too far,
> There come a hush and no one break it,
> They wondered how Miss Bourne would take it.
> She up to me with black eyes wide,
> She looked as though her spirit cried;
> She took my tumbler from the bar
> Beside where all the matches are
> And poured it out upon the floor dust,
> Among the fag-ends, spit and saw-dust.
>
> "Saul Kane," she said, "when next you drink,
> Do me the gentleness to think
> That every drop of drink accursed
> Makes Christ within you die of thirst,
> That every dirty word you say
> Is one more flint upon His way,
> Another thorn about His head,
> Another mock by where He tread,
> Another nail, another cross.
> All that you are is that Christ's loss."

As she goes out the climax is reached. The still small voice of a gray-haired Quaker woman had been for Saul the voice of God. He knows that he is a changed man. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. The peace that passeth understanding became his portion; the forgiveness of sin became an experienced fact. All that night

he spent in the open, part of the time he hardly knew where. The tempestuous night made a strange contrast with the quietness that possessed his heart.

> I did not think, I did not strive,
> The deep peace burnt my me alive;
> The bolted door had broken in,
> I knew that I had done with sin,
> I knew that Christ had given me birth
> To brother all the souls on earth,
> And every bird and every beast
> Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.

On and on he wanders. As the dawn breaks it seems to him that he looks out upon a new world, the revelation of God's everlasting mercy. In everything he sees "the vision of Him who reigns". He feels himself in harmony with the universe, and is filled with an emotion of sheer bliss. By and by he came to a field where old Gallow, the farmer, was at work. The spectacle at once suggests to him the image of Christ as the spiritual ploughman:

> Oh, patient eyes that watch the goal,
> Oh, ploughman of the sinner's soul;
> Oh, Jesus, drive the coulter deep,
> To plough my living man from sleep.
> . . . . . .
> Lo, all my heart's field red and torn,
> And Thou wilt bring the young green corn,
> And we will walk the weeded field,
> And tell the golden harvest's yield.

Then a more directly practical thought was born in Saul Kane's mind attesting the reality of his conversion; what had he done so far to justify his existence? He had been a despoiler of God's earth, a waster of God's bounties. Surely it was time for him to think of making some return. And was not the wholesome toil of the fields, the very work for him? For a long moment he stands in thought:

> Down the long slope the plough team drove,
> The tossing rooks arose and hove.
> A stone struck on the share. A word
> Came to the team. The red earth stirred.
>
> I crossed the hedge by shooter's gap,
> I hitched my boxer's belt a strap,
> I jumped the ditch and crossed the fallow;
> I took the hales from farmer Callow.

He had not merely ceased to do evil; he had begun, in God's blessed sunshine, to learn to do well. Here, indeed, was a new beginning along a new road. Here was one rescued and brought to life again from deadness in trespasses and sins. We may well believe that the joy in that human soul on earth was but the reflection of a greater joy in heaven.

Having related the story in this rapid way, I propose to deal briefly with its three outstanding lessons. First of all it brings us full up against *the reality of conversion.* It was but natural that I should associate with this address the language of the great apostle: "I was before a blasphemer, and

a persecutor, and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy." The chief interest of Paul's life centres in his conversion to the faith of Jesus Christ. This has been rightly called "the most pregnant event of apostolic history". It is more fully related in the New Testament than any other outside of the Gospels. It was a lightning stroke which liberated new forces for operation in new eras of the kingdom of God. However we may explain it, no one can deny that it changed this young Pharisee from a persecutor of Christ into an indefatigable servant. Like Saul Kane he had suddenly and finally broken with his past, suddenly and unmistakably he had become a new creature in Christ.

I am well aware that just here we must be on our guard against a false inference. We must not infer that every soul must pass through just such a crisis in order to become a genuine Christian. Modern psychology has made it plain that such an inference is untrue to the facts of human nature. Says Professor Underwood: "Every attempt at classification has its perils, for every case of conversion is, in a sense, unique, the factors which enter in being exactly identical in no two cases." These experiences which we call sudden conversions, generally occur amongst two classes of people, viz., young people in their adolescent years and older people who have wandered into the far country of sin. In regard to the first class Star-

buck has been led to the conclusion that "conversion belongs almost exclusively to the years between ten and twenty-five. That is, conversion is a distinctly adolescent phenomenon." But the point to be noted is that both of these forms of experience are real. One type must not be set over against the other. It may be perfectly true that "in order to experience a conversion like Saul Kane's you must have lived a life like his up to the time of the conversion." The same would be true of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. We are not pleading for a standardised Christian experience. We are perfectly willing to allow for differences in temperament. At the same time we believe that all should repent and be converted that their sins may be blotted out.

Some travesties of the doctrine of conversion have blinded us to the greatness and beauty of its reality. It is the grandest truth which we are capable of receiving. We have been born physically into a world which is becoming more wonderful every day. Our Lord preached to Nicodemus the need for the birth of the soul into that other world of spiritual knowledge and love. We need a better realisation of that to which we turn when we turn to God. In Him we find everything that the soul needs. Things temporal are given their eternal significance. In turning to Him we experience the sunlight on the darkened world, the music

aroused from silent strings, the breath of life on the dry bones, the touch that awakens everything to its full and true use.

In the second place we note that when the inner world of Saul Kane was cleansed the outer world was transformed and every common bush was afire with God.

> O glory of the lighted mind
> How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind.
> The station brook, to my new eyes,
> Was babbling out of Paradise,
> The waters rushing from the rain
> Were singing Christ has risen again.

Our experience is always that of the inward manifesting itself through the outward, of the spiritual manifesting itself through the material. If we are right in believing that the world which we touch and handle in daily contact with which we live, is not merely a world of matter, but is in very truth a world of spirit, then I think we are bound to admit that we cannot know the material by itself apart; nor can we know the spiritual by itself apart. What we actually know is always the spiritual in relationship to the material and the material in relationship to the spiritual. What we call the Sacraments are not strange things apart, but they are of the very substance of our experience. They are the symbols of all that we know and all that we handle. A religion could not be truly human

unless it was sacramental. That very delightful little book, *The Practice of the Presence of God,* was written by one who was a servant in the kitchen of a religious house, and who attained such eminence in the things of the spiritual life that his influence has been felt in every quarter of the globe. The author simply maintained that any skill he had in the things of the spirit came through practising the presence of God. The "blessed gift of the inner light" enabled him to realise God as near when washing the dishes in the kitchen as when kneeling before the sacrament in church. With true spiritual insight Masefield makes this one of the results of conversion.

> All earthly things that blessed morning
> Were everlasting joy and warning.
> The gate was Jesus' way made plain,
> The mole was Satan foiled again,
> Black blinded Satan snouting way
> Along the red of Adam's clay;
> The mist was error and damnation,
> The lane the road unto salvation.
> Out of the mist into the light,
> O blessed gift of inner sight.

Then, lastly, the only permanent proof of the reality of conversion, whether it be sudden or otherwise, is *the proof of the changed life.* The most hopeful feature about the conversion of Saul give practical evidence of the change that had Kane was that he felt himself instantly called to

come over him by adopting an honest calling. Charles Kingsley was never more Christian than when he said: "Life is meant for work and not for ease; to do a little good ere the night comes when no man can work, instead of trying to realise for oneself a paradise." There can be no satisfaction in life but in the proper operation and scope of our vital activities. Life's fulfilment is found in work. It was Rudyard Kipling who used the phrase, "The Master of all good workmen", and it is full of significance for all who seek the Christian way. Jesus is worthy of being the master of us all. He who stood at the bench; He who passed through His apprenticeship and kept the family; He who placed the whole of His activities at the disposal of the Father in the service of mankind, is surely the Master of all good workmen. All honest toil is but the reflection of His own activity. We need to keep this conception before us lest our work sickens us with its monotony, lest our beings become sense-bound and earth-bound, lest our activities be as mechanical as the wheels we turn in the mill or as shrivelled as the parchments we study in the office. It is the part of sin to make us idlers. It is the part of Christ to make us workers. This was the proof of Saul Kane's discipleship; it is the proof of ours also.

I kneeled there in the muddy fallow,
I knew that Christ was there with Callow,

That Christ was standing there with me,
That Christ had taught me what to be,
That I should plough, and as I ploughed
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,
And as I drove the clods apart
Christ would be ploughing in my heart.

ŒNONE

"Thou hast made him but little lower than Goa."
"He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

In a recent book entitled *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry* Alfred Noyes writes as follows: "There is no better illustration of Tennyson's growth in mastery and of his development of the technique of blank verse than a comparison of the first version of Œnone with that which he published ten years later. The first, beginning:

> There is a dale in Ida, beautiful
> As any in old Ionia,

is mellifluous but without any structural firmness. The second version is as firm and balanced in structure as a Greek temple. The cadence of the phrase is subordinated to the cadence of the sentence; the cadence of the sentence to that of the blank verse paragraph. Yet the beauty and harmony of the parts is enhanced, not lessened, in their subordination to the whole. The landscape, too, which that opening paragraph depicts has assumed an organic beauty. It is unfolded in its natural order, point by point.

> There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
> Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.

Even in that short space the development is apparent."

This is the poem in which Tennyson tells over again, in verse of exquisite sweetness, the old-world story of the judgment of Paris. He tells how that youth was called upon to award the prize to one among three goddesses—Here, the Queen of Heaven; Athene, the Queen of Wisdom; and Aphrodite, the Queen of Love. Here offered him, should the prize be hers, regal power and lordship over many lands, allegiance and alliance, secure and ever-widening sway.

She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toil,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.

Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
"Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born.
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power

Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowlege of their own supremacy."

The prospect pleased him well and flattered his ambition, insomuch that already he was prepared to yield her the coveted award.

But Athene, the wise and austere virgin goddess, now spoke, and held a higher, finer ideal before him:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

This was too exalted a view of life to appeal to Paris, the pleasure-loving and shallow.

When Aphrodite, the light-o'-love, approached and offered him what she had to offer, reflection was drowned fathoms deep in desire. To her went the prize. Thus began the long drawn out tragedy which led to Paris's own undoing, and the deaths of many brave men, and the sack of Troy.

The lines in Tennyson's poem with which we are concerned in this study are those which reveal the secret of power. These I have already quoted:

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.

And before we go further let us ask ourselves what we mean by power, what is the power we want to attain. I should define it as *the emancipation and development of what is best and noblest within us, of the faculties by which life takes on its highest meaning and is turned into a grand and worthy enterprise.* We desire nothing less than the complete and perfect emancipation of all our powers. It is a good thing to try to make an inventory of those powers. They begin down at the animal, with basal energy, primal passion, then rise to those finer conceptions and apprehensions which can have communion with God. There are all kinds of faculties and emotions ranged in their different ranks. I cannot mention half of them. We have the power of thought, of conscience, of will, of love, of hope, of hate, of jealousy.

When we look at these powers we find some of them to be asleep; some even seem to be dead, some seem to be in a rapid decline. We see them in all their array, in all their confusion, and we desire the emancipation of them, that instead of being a discord they shall be a wonderful harmony. Matthew Arnold understood it when he said, "What we need is to develop ourselves in our totality." That is exactly what we need. We want these lives of ours to be like a great farm without a

single patch lying useless or waste. We want these animal passions of ours under mastery. We want to keep them in the basement, supplying heat and energy to every other room in the soul. We want our social affinities to be acute and fine. We want every one of our powers harmonising with and co-operating with every other power. Nothing less than this will lead life to sovereign power. Tennyson declares there are three things that bring about the desired result.

The first is *self-reverence*. Each one of us has received from God the splendid endowment of a human personality, the best gift God has entrusted to us. Now all God's gifts are trusts, to be used and ordered in the spirit of a sane and enlightened stewardship. If this is true of wealth and culture and all that is summed up in the word "talents", how much more true is it of the personality to which we have just referred. How then shall this gift of God be emancipated and enriched, so that ever increasingly

> Our hearts in glad surprise
> May to higher levels rise.

Tennyson answers: Hang about your neck the jewel of self-reverence, think highly of yourself, remember the dignity of your self-hood. We are told in the old story, whose essential inspiration all science is now confirming, that man was placed

at the head of all creation in the first dim days of history. Man has always been told that his place was high but the reason for it he has not always known. He has not always known that his little deeds were the very laws of nature, that he alone is the Alpha and Omega of creation, the beginning and the end of matter, the final goal of life. To-day science enforces the truth of revelation that the drama of creation has reached its climax and that on the earth there will never be a higher creature than man. We can now put into the words of the Psalmist a deeper reverence even than that which they could have had for him. "Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."

The world we know is infinitely vaster than the world the Psalmist knew. And it is a remarkable fact that ever since the idea of the universe began to expand, the thinkers of the world have been expanding in an equal degree the soul, the personality of man. The soul has become deeper and higher and wider with every increase in our knowledge of the extent of this vast material system. The processes going on in the physical universe as we observe them here upon the earth, as we may surmise them in those great systems beyond, are not so important, are not

so intelligent as the processes which are going on in the humblest human soul. There is a sense in which the weakest and poorest human mind is greater than the galaxy of heaven. In the human mind there is a touch of God, there is the infinite. In the galaxy of heaven there is only the width and extent and manifestation of power which might be almost intelligent force. It was this great difficulty breaking upon the modern mind through familiarity with science which was faced in so remarkable a way by Tennyson in the closing years of his life. It was Tennyson who saw the very fact that I have just mentioned.

> For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
> And break the shore, and evermore
> Make and break and work their will;
> Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
> Round us, each with different powers,
> And other forms of life than ours,
> What know we greater than the soul?

Let us consider also our essential dignity in the light of other forces that are put at our disposal, and of which we are in a very real sense the outcome. By these I do not merely mean that supremacy enjoyed by man in the utilisation and control of what we call the forces of nature, such as heat, electricity and the like. I refer rather to that magnificent fund of spiritual forces that enters into the lives of us who are "the heirs of all

the ages in the foremost ranks of time". I refer to those spiritual forces which have been generated by the lives and words and influences of saint and seer, martyr and poet, reformer and artist. Is it nothing that we enter into accumulated experiences the outcome of the mystic's vision, the poet's dream, the saint's life, the prophet's message, the martyr's blood; that these have helped to put us in possession of our personalities and taught us how to use them?

And think also of the ground for self-reverence in the Gospel which proclaims the infinite value of the human soul and assures us of God's direct care for and interest in each individual, so that by our obedience we can actually help, by our disobedience we can thwart His will, and hurt His love. In this respect there is tremendous significance for us in the fact that Jesus has lived this life of ours, has possessed this self-hood that we enjoy. Surely the brightest light that ever flamed upon manhood to show its dignity and worth is the light which shines from the fact of a God in man, tabernacling in man, not disdaining to be clothed upon with a human personality. And when we remember the meaning of the Cross, that the Divine Love suffered and agonised to win us unto itself, we cannot but feel that we owe ourselves self-reverence, for we know that we, with all our sins and failures, must somehow be worth

this immense sacrifice, or God would not have made it.

In the light of such truth we must warn against the tendencies of the day which are calculated to lower our views of human nature, to make us think contemptuously of it and expect little from it. Nothing disturbs us more in the generation in which we live than the cynicism which is so easy of attainment and so false to all the inner resources of the soul. We must reverence humanity if we are to reverence ourselves. All the great work of the world has been achieved by those who held a lofty view of their fellows:

> O prophets, martyrs, saviours, ye were great
> All life being great to you: ye deemed man more
> Than a dull jest, God's ennui to amuse!

It is easy to say with Carlyle that the population of a great country is mostly fools, or to say upon mature deliberation what the Psalmist said in his haste, that all men are liars. Of course it is impossible to assume a Pollyanna attitude towards the race. When we see men in some aspects of their lives we accept the description of the old hymn—"false and full of sin." We remember that Jesus said some terrific things about the men of His day: "Beware of men;" "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" We cannot forget his language about laying

"pearls before swine and giving that which is holy unto dogs."

Nevertheless, when we have listened to the worst that He had to say and said the worst we can say about ourselves and others, we know that there is something the matter with cynicism. Nietzshe once truly said, "If you look long enough into the abyss, the abyss will begin to look into you." The man who is cynical about others will in turn become cynical about himself. Here again Tennyson is our teacher. You recall the pitiful cry of Guinevere:

> O shut me round with narrowing nunnery walls,
> Meek maidens, from the voices crying "shame".
> I *must not scorn myself.*

Scorn of others inevitably leads to the scorn of self. The man who imbibes the poison of cynicism will discover that it kills joy and saps sanity and ends life. Verily this is high Christian teaching—self-reverence "leads life to sovereign power."

We have not time to deal with the second secret referred to by our poet, viz., self-knowledge. Perhaps its omission from this study can be excused on the ground that we have, to some extent, covered it under what we have just said. Let us pass on to note *the importance of self-control.* This approach to the secret of power is in direct opposition to certain dominant tendencies of

thought in our modern world. We are told that the ideal for to-day is self-expression not self-discipline. We are supposed to be suffering from undue reserve. This involves the annihilation of natural and healthy impulses. Our great fault to-day is that we are afraid to let ourselves go. Art, for instance, is stilted and conventional. It is limited and conventionalised by this particular restriction and the other, self-imposed or imposed by some school and fashion of art. The result is that artists do not throw their whole nature and their whole soul on to the canvas. Young people are told that they must not be calculating or too worldly-wise or over-prudent. The aim of life is self-expression.

Well what is the matter with that philosophy of life? We hasten to admit that it really expresses a great truth. The aim of life is not restraint but release. The ideal is to liberate the inner powers of being so that lives may be unfolded. But who is it that succeeds in getting himself expressed? How does the great musician achieve his freedom of self-expression? By discipline and self-mastery. How does the artist throw his soul on the canvas? By first of all finding his soul. I like the way one of our modern writers states it. "Self-expression comes not from looseness but from self-control. No horse ever draws a load until he is harnessed. No steam ever drives anything until it is confined.

No Niagara ever is transformed into light and power until it is tunneled. Nothing let loose ever does anything."

Self-control does not mean that we shall be checked and curbed and strained in every direction. It means the fullest exercise and activity of every one of our faculties and powers. It means that we are going to travel at our highest speed and do it easily. It means that we are going to do what is required of us without stress and strain. Thus it is that self-control means self-cultivation. The statement of Jesus is eternally true: "Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it."

This approach to the secret of power is in direct opposition to another dominant tendency in the thought of to-day. I have in mind those, who like Lothrop Stoddard, are so impressed with the influence of environment in the shaping of life, that they cannot do justice to the importance of self-control. We frankly admit that a better environment is one of the crying needs of many of our fellow creatures. The last few years have seen a large increase in the number of suicides. Our sadness is intensified by the fact that many in the prime of life have perpetrated self-slaughter. The bewildering complexity of modern life has led to a division and sub-division of labour that sets men working all their lives at small, detailed work—

doing the same small thing day after day till the monotony becomes unbearable. This and other causes lead to melancholy, disappointment, despair, and self-inflicted death.

Undoubtedly men need better environments. There is no hope for some until they get them. At the same time I would permit myself what Dr. Fosdick calls "a glorious inconsistency" and say with him, "When I am dealing with a social group battling with adverse circumstances, I would fight with them, but when I face my own soul alone, or anybody else's soul alone, tempted to make unfavorable environment an excuse for moral failure, to fall back upon adverse circumstance in self-pity, then another message must come. It is amazing what a man who rules his own spirit can do with almost any set of circumstances." Nearly all biography teaches this lesson. The greatness of great men was not nourished in favourable circumstances but in inward resources. The lives of the saints have the same story to tell. From the saints in Caesar's household to the saints of this present hour, not one ever drifted into a victorious life on the tide of encouraging environment. They have reached the heights of sovereign power by the difficult road of self-control.

I wish we could believe that this glorious control of life is a possibility to all of us. It was that power which made the impetuous Peter into a

stony and self-reliant man. It was that tremendous power that took Augustine of the fiery spirit and made of a mere worldly passion a passion sacred and holy. It is still the same power that is offered to you and me. Here is Tennyson's picture of the isle "ere Arthur came"—

> There grew great tracts of wilderness,
> Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
> But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
> . . . . . Then he drave
> The heathen; after, slew the beast, and felled
> The forest, letting in the sun, and made
> Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight
> And so returned.

If it be true in our life that "the beast was ever more and more but man was less and less", we need but crown the divine Arthur king to find the beast becoming less and the man becoming more. Everything comes back to that. When we deal nobly with our own souls we are close to the heart of Christ. No man ever really masters his soul until he gives himself to the mastery of the highest. This sounds paradoxical but it is a paradox sublimely true. Self-control comes through self-surrender. Life attains unto sovereign power when it is yielded to Jesus Christ.

SAUL

"If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your heavenly Father....."

Browning's *Saul* has an historic background. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." The character of Saul as it is sketched in the opening chapters of the Book of Samuel is singularly beautiful and attractive. Tall in figure, with mighty sinews, and withal so modest, that when he is summoned to the kingship of his people he hides. Throughout his career he exhibits a vigour and a valour that are commendable. He is portrayed as revealing wisdom in counsel and alertness in action. He is considerate of others and impartial in the exercise of authority. In the early narrative he is presented as generous in the hour of victory, brave in the hour of battle—in all respects a noble and heroic king.

Now a dark shadow falls upon him, and his life degenerates. Dr. R. F. Horton makes the interesting suggestion that the shadow is not due so much to his own faults as to the singular harshness

of the prophet Samuel in his dealings with him. "There are two faults which are mentioned as the ground of the judgment and his rejection from the throne, and neither of them carries any conviction with it to the mind of the modern reader." The one fault is that in an impending battle with the Philistines the prophet Samuel had promised to come at an appointed time to a sacrifice before the battle and the prophet did not come. The enemy was pressing and Saul forced himself to offer the sacrifice in order that he might not fight the enemy without the approbation of the Lord. This appears to us an act of piety rather than the opposite. The second fault is the charge against the King that in fighting with the Amalekites, he had spared some of them, including his chief opponent, King Agag. It is upon this ground that the prophet Samuel declares that the Lord has departed from Saul, but to us it seems an act of mercy. There is no question of sincerity on the part of Samuel involved. He believes all along that he is declaring the will of God to Saul and executing the judgment of God upon him. Unhappily the mistakes of religious people in their dealings with others are generally sincere; that is the peculiar mischief of them.

Thus we are led to the conclusion that it is Samuel who ruined Saul. He banned and rejected him for what he took to be his faults. He shut his

eyes to all the penitence and all the virtues of the king. And thus dishonoured in the face of his own people by the prophet who had been the ruler of Israel, the king degenerated. An awful gloom settled upon his spirit. He began to look with jealous hatred at David whom he regarded as his rival and whom at first he had welcomed with a fatherly love. He began even to suspect his own son, because Jonathan was friendly with David. He even ordered the slaughter of the priests of Nob because one of them had rendered service to David under the impression that David was still the honoured servant of the king. It is a pitiful fall, a rapid melancholy declension. The sun of Saul goes down in storm and lurid wrath.

It is this peculiar situation in the story of Saul that offers the motive for Browning's poem. This poem is what Dr. Horton calls "the correction of the conventional view of the Old Testament story of Saul. It is eminently characteristic of Browning, but it is also eminently characteristic of Christ." Browning offers an excuse for Saul. He presents the nobility and greatness of the man. Most important of all he sets out to redeem him. This he does by the happy device of making David, his rival, the instrument of his redemption.

The poem falls from the lips of David. It begins with the breathless activity in the camp of Israel concerning the state of their king. Saul

had hidden himself in his tent in one of his melancholic seizures, and none had dared to enter. Abner, the king's general, told David that he had been sent for to play on his harp. So great was their anxiety that food and drink were impossible till it was relieved. They vowed that they would partake of nothing before David's return from the royal tent with the assurance that Saul was once again himself.

> For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
> Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
> To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
> And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

Then David describes how he entered the tent where the moody and distraught king was standing. He spoke: "Here is David, thy servant!" No voice replied.

> At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I descried
> A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
> Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
> Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
> Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the tent roof, showed Saul.

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms
stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes
to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught
in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king serpent all
heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliver-
ance come
With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear
and stark, blind and dumb.

David began to play on his harp. First he played the tune he was wont to play as he shepherded his sheep on Bethlehem's plains, when, like Orpheus, "he twanged the chords that made the wayward animals docile and dumb before the magic of the music." He played the strain for which quails on the corn-land will each leave his mate to fly after the player, and the air which elates the crickets, until they want to fight one another, and the melody which sets the jerboa a-musing outside his sand-house. Then he rose a step higher in the scale of life and played the tunes of human enjoyment; tunes calculated to appeal to the spirit of man. He played the tune of the reapers when "hand grasps at hand" and "eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand." Then the funeral hymn "when the dead man is praised on his journey." After that the marriage chant suggesting the joy

of life, and the battle march which arouses the ardour of the warrior, and the "chorus intoned as the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned." At this the first sign of life was given by Saul. He shuddered and his head moved till the jewels in his turban sparkled.

Encouraged by these signs of awakening David bent himself once more to his playing, and sang as he played. The human voice mingled with the music of the harp. The singer sang of life. The sheer majesty of his own healthy life burst forth in an overwhelming ecstasy:

> Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock
> up to rock,
> The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the
> cool silver shock
> Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of
> the bear,
> And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in
> his lair.
>
> How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit
> to employ
> All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in
> joy!

His appeal now is to things intense in their human significance. He is in the realm of man's dealings with man. And then God and God's will are held up for reverence as the explanation of all healthy activity. The love of father, mother,

brother, friend—are but the sacraments of the all-penetrating love of God. Though at times "they sing through their tears," it is nevertheless "in strong triumph." Their common verdict is "I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and all was for best." Such, declares the singer, was the hopefulness in which the king's youth had been nurtured, played upon by the influence of his friends, till, grown head and shoulders above his fellows in bodily stature, he, the man who had led his fellows against their country's foes, had with one acclaim and with the sanction of Almighty God been proclaimed "King Saul!" All the intensity of David's life and all the passion of his heart are poured forth in those two words "King Saul." The result was life. "One long shudder thrilled all the tent till the very air tingled." The task still remained of nourishing the life back to strength and to confidence.

David begins to sing once more. This time it is the song of life, the glory of the soul, the immortality of influence. Even in the past that seemed to Saul so diseased and darkened was the germ of higher and more fruitful service. Hailing him as his king he makes him act as a king. Brightness came over him as "the dawn struggling with night on his shoulder." The soul of Saul had risen from the struggle into newness of life.

I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace: . . .
And oh, all my heart how it loved him!

Then the truth came upon him. In sheer joy he pours out his soul.

I spoke as I saw,
Reported, as man may of God's work—all's love,
yet all's law.

God is in His universe and above it. He is to be seen "in the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod." This can be discerned through humility, in "that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too," in "the submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete." Having seen thus far the soul may launch out into the future with hope and faith. Surely God will complete what He has begun. The creature cannot surpass the Creator. And if in some weak moment Saul again falls into sin or despondency, surely God will interpose and snatch him from his failure, set him "clear and safe in new light and new life."

After all life is not to be judged by what it is, but by what it is becoming.

What stops my despair?
This:—'tis not what man Does which exalts him,
but what man Would do!

David knows that he would lay down his life that Saul might be saved. Contemplating that, a great

thought comes surging over him. If he, the poor shepherd, the insignificant singer, was willing to suffer for the soul he loved, so was God. The "topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown" of God's nature is to be seen in His willingness to suffer for His children. The climax is reached when Saul is led to seek not redemption only, but the Redeemer, Who laid down His life a ransom for many.

> 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
> In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
> A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
> Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
> Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

The poem concludes with a complete transformation in the soul of the harper and the singer. After a marvellous experience with the things of God he leaves the tent and steals homeward. The whole silence of the night is thrilled through and through with the glory of the Saviour, the Saviour who can save Saul and all the world.

> And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
> With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—"E'en so, it is so!"

The teaching of Browning's *Saul* is significant for many reasons, but chiefly because of the *revelation it gives concerning the character of God.* It makes one think of the language of Jesus: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your heavenly Father." A chaplain tells how a soldier once said to him, "What is God like? You ought to know; that is your business, Padre." It is a very important question. We rise from the study of Browning's profound treatise believing that God is better than the best of men. We must dissociate from our thought of God anything that would be unworthy of a good man. John Stuart Mill was right when he said: "I will call no being good who is not what I mean by good when I apply the word to my fellow-creatures." There is one moral standard for both God and man.

> Nothing can be good in Him
> Which evil is in me.

The argument of Browning is from the heart of man to the heart of God. This, also, was the argument of Jesus. The way in which He proved God's goodness was to show the goodness which is to be found in the human heart. If you want to know what God is, if you want to know whether He loves and pities and saves, look into your own heart; measure the tenderness, the self-denial, the

loving service, the unwearied devotion of which you are capable in spite of the evil that is in you, and then look up to God in Whom there is no evil and see in Him the inexhaustible fountain of it all. All that is best in you came from Him. Your love is but a dim reflection of His love. You are kind but God is infinitely kinder. You are ready to bear the burden of the afflicted, God is infinitely readier. You would suffer for one you love, much more would God. Your love stands the long strain of the years, God's love stands the long strain of eternity. George MacDonald gives us a picture of the persistence of a mother's love in *Robert Falconer*. The old grandmother is overheard by her grandson praying for the boy's father, whom she thought dead. He had lived an evil life and she thinks of him as a lost soul in hell, to be tormented for ever. In her agony she prays: "O Lord, I canna say, 'Thy will be done,' but dinna lay't to me chairge; for gin ye was a mither yoursel' ye wadna pit him there."

To know God is to know love that will not let us go; it is to know God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The greatness of human nature is shown in this, that men can love their fellows unto death. It is not only amongst the great but amongst the obscure and humble, that these heroes have been found. Now is God greater than His creatures? Does the creature surpass the

Creator? Does God love more than David and all these lovers of mankind? The answer according to Browning is the Cross of Christ. That Cross is the supreme sacrifice. Men have stooped in service, but none have stooped so far as He "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross."

If God grieves over our sins, as He sorrows over and with our sorrows, we behold on the Cross the divine Love agonising for man's failures, bearing all things even unto the uttermost that we might have life. It is Christ crucified who has brought the world to a knowledge of the everlasting desire of God that men should live. How deeply this idea of the divine suffering for human transgressions has entered into the Christian consciousness is well brought out in the old English Morality of *Everyman,* where the Lord is represented as thus sadly and touchingly musing over man's waywardness:

> I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
> To get them life, I suffered to be dead;
> I healed their feet; with thorns hurt was my head;
> I could do no more than I did, truly.

That is how simple men have interpreted the message of the Cross. It is the perpetual guarantee that God's love is stronger than man's failure, and that God means us to be saved.

The only other thing we can take time to mention in our study of *Saul* is Browning's teaching concerning *the greatness of life as a pledge of immortality*. "How good is man's life, the mere living!" But if man the creature loves life, God the Creator loves it more. "And if man and God love it so, it cannot be a transient thing, but everlasting. God, who is ever good, cannot create such a love for the sake of disappointment. If man's love for life would immortalize it, much more God's love makes it immortal." Life is great and God's goodness projects it into eternity. The growth of the human soul here on earth gives us some clue to its future destiny. God does nothing in vain. When he gives man such a nature it is for a purpose, it is that the spirit may reach its end.

> From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
> Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new harmony yet
> To be run and continued, and ended!—who knows? —or endure!
> The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;

By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

During the war they told me of a young soldier who said the night after he came out of the trenches: "My pal died last night. It has hit me hard. But Harry is all right. He'll carry on. It would take more than that to stop him." The Master Himself taught that His death would not end His beneficent activities, that His work would go on. There is not one law for Him and another for us. Browning held the Christian conviction that men do not end their labours here. Elsewhere they take up their immortal tasks and carry on with clearer vision and larger opportunity.

He would hardly be a heavenly Father who would endow men with the love of life, and teach them to find their supreme joy and education in His love and at death suddenly blot it out. That would be a strange manifestation of wisdom and of power. The song that is only partly sung when death bids us hush must be continued elsewhere. The task so nobly begun and left incomplete must be resumed in another clime. As a man came out of prison he lifted up his eyes and looked across the landscape. "I haven't looked," he said, "more than two hundred yards in front of me in twenty years." There is many a man not in prison who

could say that about himself. With a true vision of life and God he may take a long look and hear the Master of life and Revealer of God assuring him that

> Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
> Was not spoken of the soul!

THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE

"Ye are God's building."

I do not know that John Ruskin ever stood in a pulpit. But I do know that it is impossible to study his works without realizing that he was a great preacher of the truths of God. It was his religious passion that drew from George Eliot the testimony, "He teaches with the inspiration of a Hebrew prophet". A Scottish theologian of the present day agrees with that testimony: "During the bygone century it may be doubted if the ornaments of the Christian pulpit did so much as lay preachers like Carlyle and Ruskin to quicken the social conscience and to command lofty ideals in the various departments of secular life and labour". Ruskin has ever been regarded as a great critic of art. How great he was in that particular sphere I am in no position to judge. But of this I am certain; throughout a long life he used his incomparable gift of expression with a great moral purpose. He used it to condemn everything evil and exalt everything good. He used it to lead men away from everything ugly and towards everything beautiful. He used it to defeat hypocrisy and to inculcate sincerity and reverence.

It was his primary purpose to insist on the importance of the inner life. A man is what he is in his soul. A good picture cannot emanate from a bad man, a true song cannot be uttered by a false soul. There can be no real beauty which does not spring from beauty of soul. The character of a people is responsible for the kind of art produced. The art produced is a reflection of the character of a people. "The first, and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' Tell me what you like and I will tell you what you are. Go out into the street and ask the first man or woman you meet what their taste is; and if they answer candidly you know them body and soul." It is impossible to drag a false or impure life up to the heights of lofty endeavour. "Would you paint a great picture? be a good man. Would you carve a perfect statue? be a pure man. Would you enact a wise law? be a just man." In all this it must not be supposed that Ruskin's interest was merely ethical. He had consecrated his life, not merely to "the study of the beautiful in face or flower, in landscape or gallery, but to an interpretation of the truth and beauty of Jesus Christ."

But John Ruskin was fully aware of another religious truth which has received great emphasis since his day. Religion is not only personal, it is social. The Gospel has a ministry of healing for sin-

ful men and women; it also has a plan of spiritual health for society. The new life enters the world through individuals whom it recreates and through a social order which reshapes the men and women who live under it. It is a significant fact that no man influenced General Booth more than Ruskin. Long before *In Darkest England and the Way Out* was published, Ruskin was preaching the gospel of social service. Much of his immortal fame rests upon his work as a social reformer, a champion of the poor and weak. It was not possible for him to secure practical application of his teaching in art amid unjust social and industrial conditions. His ventures in the realm of political science brought him intense unpopularity. It may be that he was mistaken in some of his schemes. There can be no doubt, however, about his sincerity in trying to apply the teachings of Jesus to the industrial conditions of his day. His penetrating observation led him to repudiate the teaching of the then dominant school—that everyone will always do what is best for himself. "Not at all," said Ruskin; "many men's actions are guided by pure altruism." And although he did not allude to himself, his own life was thus guided and directed.

He preached vigorously the social principles of the Kingdom. He agreed violently with the old Jewish maxim, "He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him". But in it all he never

substituted social betterment for individual righteousness. He saw that it always takes regenerated men to create a regenerated society. His sarcastic version of the Ten Commandments is the greatest condemnation of subtle hypocrisy in the English language:

"Thou shalt have gods of self and ease and pleasure before me. Thou shalt worship thine own imaginations as to house and goods and business, and bow down and serve them. Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day, to see to it that all its hours are given to sloth and lounging and stuffing the body with rich foods, leaving the children of sorrow and ignorance to perish in their sodden misfortune. Thou shalt kill and slay men by doing as little as possible thyself, and squeezing as much as possible out of others. Thou shalt look upon loveliness in womanhood to soil it with impurity. Thou shalt steal daily; the employer from the servant and the servant from the employer, and the devil take the hindmost. Thou shalt get thy livelihood by weaving a great web of falsehoods and sheathing thyself in lies. Thou shalt covet thy neighbour's house to possess it for thyself; thou shalt covet his office and his farm, his goods and his fame, and everything that is his. And to crown all these laws the devil has added a new commandment—thou shalt hate thy neighbour as thou dost hate thyself."

The all essential thing is the inner life of the soul. If an artist is to produce a great picture he must not merely prepare his canvas but he must prepare himself. If the architect is to produce a noble structure he must do the same. Therefore it is of supreme importance that a man look to the building of character. As Ruskin studied the great cathedrals of Europe, the laws by which their foundations were made firm and their tower secure and their domes perfect, he was led to write *The Seven Lamps of Architecture.* They are the seven laws of life. For there is no cathedral so majestic as the soul. Whatever else a human being may be doing in this world, there is one task he is continually engaged in, the task of making himself. Here, truly, is a marvellous building at work, the work of building up mind and character in self, the self we are to be in all the future. This slow accretion of habits, of acts, of impulses, of morality and emotion, tending toward a fixed form —this is the structure of character we are building and which God is finally to look upon and measure. We welcome anything that will enable us to seek the light, to aspire after truth, to make our souls expand that they may become vast, high-domed, many chambered, beautiful buildings that shall endure. The ancient sage said "Through wisdom is an house builded, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge shall the chambers

be filled." Surely it will help us to know something about the laws that govern the architecture of the soul.

The first is *the law of sacrifice.* "All old work has been hard work. It may be the hard work of children, of barbarians, of rustics; but it is always their utmost." In speaking of the work of genius Ruskin was impressed with the amount of sacrifice put into it. "We know not for what they laboured, and we see no evidence of their reward. But of them, and their life and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence, is left to us in those gray heaps of deep-wrought stones. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honours, and their errors; but they have left us their adoration."

Nothing worthwhile in this world has ever been achieved without sacrifice. It is a solemnizing thought to remember how much of human life enters into all the commonest things we use. They all cost human toil and peril and blood. We think of the lives that have been laid down to redeem the wilderness from the grip of the jungle and make it blossom as the rose. We think of the hosts of pioneers who have built up the institutions of commerce and learning which are the very life of our civilization. The whole civilization which we are inclined to accept as a matter of course and with-

out a thought of gratitude, is cross-marked and blood-stained.

Kipling has a poem entitled *Sons of Martha.* These sons are the men of to-day who are marked by Martha's spirit of quiet immersion in duty, the men who are silently shouldering most of the practical responsibilities of life. Of course Kipling makes the plea that Martha and all her sons should be recognized as true servants of the Lord. But the poet does not forget to call our attention to the cost of that service which we all accept as if it were ours by right.

> Raise ye the stone or cleave the wood, to make a path more fair or flat;
> Lo, it is black already with blood some son of Martha spilled for that;
> Not as a ladder from earth to Heaven, not as a witness to any creed,
> But simple service, simply given, to his own kind in their common need.

There you have the note of sacrifice to which we have all grown more responsive since the world war. Sacrifice is the cost of that constant service of Martha's sons that makes life easier and more enjoyable for us all. That is the black mark on the stone and the wood of daily life.

In all this we feel there is an appeal we must somehow answer. Life bought at such a price is a most sacred trust. To make an idle or selfish

use of it is utterly unworthy. When Robert Louis Stevenson thought of all that his father had done and endured to build lighthouses on the most dangerous coasts of Scotland, he felt that there was in that a call to him also to "make good". And the vow springs to his lips:

> This hast thou done, and I—can I be base?
> I must arise, O father, and to port
> Some lost, complaining seaman pilot home.

This is the answer that sacrifice calls for. To put it in the language of Ruskin: "The great mystery of the idea of sacrifice which has been manifested as one united and solemn instinct by all thoughtful races since the world became peopled, is founded on the sacred truths that you cannot save men from death but by facing it for them, nor from sin but by resisting it for them."

In the second place we have *the law of truth.* It is impossible to build a beautiful life without truth. There is absolutely no room in such a life for untruth. That was Ruskin's message. All art must be truthful. Standing in Venice one day he saw a cathedral in ruins, and he said, "Somebody has been untruthful, somebody placed lying stones in those walls and foundations." When he entered a home and found people burning up with fever he said, "Somebody has been untruthful, somebody put lying lead in the drainage pipes."

When he saw a ship dashed against the rocks and a hundred lives lost, he exclaimed, "Somebody has been untruthful, somebody put lying links in the anchor chain that should have held the ship during the storm." Going into a church in the midst of a heavy rainstorm, he saw large buckets placed to catch the water as it dripped from "the matchless frescoes of Tintoretto," and he said, "Somebody has been untruthful, somebody has put lying tiles upon the roof."

All of which shows that Ruskin is not thinking merely of the Biblical commandment to speak the truth. He is thinking of truth in action, in thought, in life. When Plato discusses truth and falsehood he is profoundly afraid of what he calls "the lie in the soul". The worst kind of lie, in his view, is the involuntary one. Our idea of a true man is mainly one who is true to other people; Plato is more anxious that we should be true to ourselves. The worst foes to truthfulness, in his eyes, are not cowardice, duplicity, and dishonesty, so much as false standards, warped ideas, ignorance, and vulgarity of soul. In thinking of Plato's idea we shall probably call to mind the often quoted lines from Shakespeare:

> To thine own self be true;
> And it must follow as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

The Christian conception involves absolute

loyalty to truth. The test might be whether, if placed in circumstances where lies or untrue practices of any kind were customary, we should defy the custom and tell the truth. But it involves a great deal more than this. It involves our being very keen and eager in getting to know the truth about all that affects our own lives and the welfare of those we influence, the truth about the necessities and conditions and dangers of the times in which we live, the truth about the laws of God in the soul, both because they are a revelation of His character and will, and also because it is our highest interest to live in conformity to them.

Then we come to *the law of power.* "In thus reverting to the memories of those works of architecture by which we have been most pleasurably impressed, it will generally happen that they fall into two broad classes: the one characterized by an exceeding preciousness and delicacy, and the other by a severe, and, in many cases, mysterious majesty, which we remember with an undiminished awe, like that felt at the presence and operature of some great Spiritual Power." That sense of spiritual power gives to us a consciousness of inward strength which removes all fears. Human nature is made of very strange material. We are constantly surprised at our ability to bear what seems to be unendurable. Under the pressure of a great incentive we can accomplish miracles and when

necessity compels us we can endure almost anything. No man is thoroughly acquainted with himself. There are depths and heights in his soul which he has never explored. In one environment he is a commonplace creature; in another he develops into a hero. Some men are unconscious giants but they will never do a giant's work until they feel the presence and operation of the spirit of power.

I think of a tidal channel, and of a vessel ready for a long and adventurous voyage. The cargo is all on board, the steam is in the boilers, the fires are burning brightly in the furnaces. All the arrangements for the voyage have been completed; there is nothing wanted so far as preparedness is concerned. But there is no movement seawards. The captain and the crew are waiting for something. That something is the rising of the tide. The vessel is made for the sea, not the land, and however perfect her equipment, she will not move till that tide lifts her. But directly that tide does come, the engines will begin to throb, the vast bulk will begin to move, the helm will begin to direct her course and the ship will be on her way. "And behold, I will send forth the promise of My Father upon you! but tarry ye . . . till ye be clothed with power from on high."

The fourth law is *the law of beauty.* There is a debate whether beauty exists in things them-

selves or only in us who perceive them. Professor Thomson of Aberdeen has recently contended for the fact of beauty as part of the constitution of nature, and says that "in the age-long struggle for existence the unharmonious, the impossible have been always weeded out before they took firm root and multiplied". According to this view beauty is not something added to nature, but is structural and organic. It is the outward expression of an inner perfection. It was in this sense that Ruskin used the word. Beauty is fulness of life. It is the one final goal toward which all nature moves and toward which all human life should move.

What is the meaning of this omnipresent beauty? Why is it so profuse in earth and sea and sky? What is its message? I can only answer in the words of Ruskin. It is "written on the arched sky; it looks out from every star; it is among the hills and valleys of the earth, where the shrubless mountain-top pierces the thin atmosphere of eternal winter, or where the mighty forest fluctuates before the strong wind, with its dark waves of green foliage; it is spread out like a legible language upon the broad face of the unsleeping ocean; it is the poetry of Nature; it is that which uplifts the spirit within us, until it is strong enough to overlook the shadows of our place of probation, which breaks link after link of the chain that tends us to materiality and which opens to our imagina-

tion a world of spiritual beauty and holiness". God Himself is the end of the quest of the beautiful, the perfect beauty of holiness. When Ruskin spoke of "the eternal and divine canons of loveliness", he meant that the laws of art are one with the fundamental rules that make for righteousness, and that beauty is forever one with purity.

And now we reach *the law of life*. "Man," says Ruskin, "has a true and a false hope, a true and a false charity, and, finally, a true and a false life. . . His false life is, indeed, but one of the conditions of death. And that condition is a sad one to look upon. All the steps are marked most clearly in the arts, and in Architecture more than in any other; for it, being especially dependent on the warmth of the true life, is also peculiarly sensible of the hemlock cold of the false; and I do not know anything more oppressive, when the mind is once awakened to its characteristics, than the aspect of a dead architecture." There is something more oppressive than a dead architecture and that is a dead soul. Dead souls are not part of God's will. Life to the full is His purpose. He has not brought man into the world for any other reason.

It is just here we think of the saying of Jesus concerning Himself: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Jesus is a great teacher and a great priest and a great leader. But He is more. He is a life-

giver. The power of life-giving belongs to every great personality. It is this power which makes the great statesman, the great general, the great orator; it is this power which makes the mother a greater power than the statesman or orator. She gives her life to her children, and by her life-giving inspires their life, moulds their character, and determines their destiny. Jesus, by the inspiring power of His own personality, endows those who come to Him with a new life quite unlike that with which they were endowed by birth or education.

Religion is the life of God in the soul of man. This life Jesus imparts, by the gifts of His own mystic personality, to all who come into fellowship with Him. It is a life of faith and hope and love. It produces the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control. Whosoever wishes this life can have it; not, it is true, for the mere asking, but for asking and complying with the conditions of the gift. This is to receive Him as a life-giver. I quote the words of Emerson and presume to strike out one word and put in another:

> For Thou, Oh *Christ*, canst renovate
> All that High God did first create,
> Be still His arm and architect,
> Rebuild the ruin, mend defect.

The sixth law is *the law of memory*. Ruskin looks upon architecture as the "protectress of this

sacred influence. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. . . There are two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality." The law of remembrance enables us to guard our treasures. It fetches the past and lays it at our feet. It floods the mind with the history of bygone days. Pride of national lineage and gratitude to national heroes often make memory rise to her full stature. The noble buildings that our fathers reared are ours to enjoy but not to destroy. He is a shallow man indeed who has no appreciation of the past and who does not hold it in sacred remembrance. In the past we shall find much of the inspiration to make our present what it should be.

This is especially true of our religious experience. During the last days of Horace Bushnell he was told by the doctor that he must seek the hills or die. He went to the White Mountains, and there, in the open air, found some measure of prolonged life. Mark Twain's pastor, Dr. Twitchell, tells how he went up one night to keep company with Horace Bushnell. As they lay together at night under the canopy of the trees, Bushnell said to his friend, "One of us ought to pray here before we sleep". His friend said, "Doctor, you pray". Bushnell began to pray in this language, "I have

remembered all the way that Thou, my God, hath led me", and then he poured out a heart so full of light and love that Twitchell said in speaking of it: "I was afraid to stretch out my hands into the darkness for fear I should have touched God." And this is but an illustration of those experiences that will come to any one who realizes that memory is a law of his soul.

Finally there is *the law of obedience.* "Nor is it the least among the sources of more serious satisfaction which I have found in the pursuit of a subject that at first appeared to bear but slightly on the grave interests of mankind, that the conditions of material perfection which it leads me in conclusion to consider, furnish a strange proof how false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty: most treacherous, indeed, of all phantoms; for the feeblest ray of reason might surely show us, that not only its attainment, but its being, was impossible. There is no such thing in the universe."

There is no such thing in the universe as a limitless freedom. The architect must build according to the laws of Nature. And when he yields to those laws he is free to enjoy the service of perfect freedom. So in the building of the soul. Obedience is the core of character. No man is free until he is mastered. Every man of science

understands it as well as Huxley: "Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever nature leads, or you shall learn nothing." Just as surely does that law apply to human personality. We have never known freedom except when we have been carried out of ourselves. This is why obedience to Christ leads to fulness of life. When mastered by Him religion becomes spontaneous and a man is sent out rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free.

A HYMN OF LOVE

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

The Church of Scotland has had few more distinguished ministers during the last fifty years than George Matheson. Strange as it may seem, this youth handicapped by blindness had a brilliant university career. He became the author of important theological works such as *The Spiritual Development of St. Paul,* which many regard as his most important book. He became a preacher of the front rank in Edinburgh. On all sides it was recognized that he possessed a deeply original mind, nurtured on the best, and in turn nourishing others. In speaking of his blindness his biographer says, "Of all men he was the most reticent with regard to his own afflictions, and so far as his great affliction was concerned he was, for the most part, absolutely silent. He never bemoaned his fate: he made no parade of his calamity, nor did he ever show any natural pride in the triumph which he won over it." He excelled in brief devotional meditations, compressing within two or three pages a wealth of choicely-expressed thought; and his *Words by the Wayside, Rests by the River, Leaves for Quiet Hours* form a devotional treasury to

which one may repair again and again without exhausting its riches.

In addition to all, and above all, he wrote the hymn *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*—a composition which is sure to take its place among the permanent possessions of the Christian Church. It springs from a strong, invincible sense of the love of God, and is able by its sincerity to strengthen the same sense in us. It is very noble poetry, charged with tenderness and courage, and in the truest sense it is an inspired message. There is little doubt that his immortal fame will rest securely upon these four stanzas. Whatever future influence his other writings may exert, this hymn will be sung and quoted so long as the Cross and the Divine love of which it is the symbol continue to minister to the needs of sinful humanity. He in a way took no credit for it. It was something which the writer himself felt to have been given to him rather than produced by him.

The circumstances under which it was written are well-known. The best account is the one which he himself has furnished: "My hymn was composed in the manse of Innellan on the evening of 6th June, 1882. I was at that time alone. It was the day of my sister's marriage, and the rest of the family were staying over night in Glasgow. Something had happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most

severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression rather of having it dictated to me by some inward voice than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction. The Hymnal Committee of the Church of Scotland desired to change one word. I had written originally 'I climbed the rainbow in the rain'. They objected to the word 'climb' and I put 'trace'." This account impresses us with the hymn's inspiration. A greater Power worked through him, and enabled him to find the perfectly fitting form with an ease and sureness that astonished himself. The right thought clothes itself spontaneously in the right words. We feel assured that it had to be so, and rejoice in a message which has come from God.

When we turn to the hymn itself the very first verse brings us into the clear light of one of the sublimest of Christian truths.

> O Love that wilt not let me go,
> I rest my weary soul in Thee;
> I give Thee back the life I owe,
> That in Thine ocean depths its flow
> May richer, fuller be.

We think of God's love in many of its aspects but how seldom in this. We rejoice that that love goes

forth in Christ to redeem the fallen. We rejoice that its constraining power may be felt in our hearts as the highest motive for service. But here we are assured of something else—that Love will not let us go. One of its dimensions is length. We may forget. Our lives are strewn with the dead leaves of lost loves and forgotten friendships. True you do find instances of a love that defies distance or time. We are familiar with the story of the painter Romney, who when a young man married a bride, Mary of Kendal. Sir Joshua Reynolds, his master, said to him, "You will never make a great artist now; marriage ruins art." He left his bride and went to London to seek favour at court, and during the years he cruelly neglected her. All the time he was seeking fame and reputation. Yet with all his skill he was never one of the greatest painters. Then when premature old age came upon him, and his sight was failing, all his fair-weather friends turned away, and his heart went back to the bride of his youth. He went home to Kendal. She received him without one word of reproach, as though he had never left her. She comforted him, nursed him in his last illness, and he died in her arms. Tennyson sings of her as

> The truest, kindliest, noblest-hearted wife
> That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

We do find instances of a faithful heart that loves

more than anyone deserves. But we forget that all such love is but the reflection of the love of God. We may forget Him, we may neglect Him, we may disobey Him, and all the time He is loving us just the same and with a love that nothing can alter. Through all eternity it exists. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness will I draw thee." And listen to this: "Thou loveds't me before the foundation of the world." And to this: "That in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." "Before the foundation of the world" and "in the ages to come". From eternity to eternity. What can one do with a thought like that! It is like gazing on a vista that is endless. God's love is not an incident in His career; it is His career. And age after age there will appear some new unfolding of His love.

> They sin who tell us love can die.
> With life all other passions fly,
> All others are but vanity.
> In Heaven ambition cannot dwell,
> Nor avarice in the vaults of Hell;
> Earthly these passions of the earth,
> They perish where they have their birth;
> But love is indestructible.

On the consciousness of that love Matheson tells us we may rest our souls. That truth came to him

out of bodily affliction. He makes us think of what Gladstone said of Henry Fawcett: "His heroic acceptance of the calamity of blindness has left a memorable example of the power of a brave man to transmute loss into gain, and wrest victory from misfortune." That truth came to him out of the darkness of doubt. When blindness dropped its curtain over the earth and sea and sky and his beloved Scottish hills he experienced great perplexity of soul. And yet he rejoiced in a love that was not only strong but tenacious. He looked upon it as the ocean from which the river of his life had sprung. In conscious communion with the Eternal Love he learned that his life could be made richer and fuller.

If the first verse of the hymn teaches us that God is love, the second teaches that God is light.

> O Light that followest all my way,
> I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
> My heart restores its borrowed ray,
> That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
> May brighter, fairer be.

John Henry Newman calls us to follow the "Kindly Light" that leads us on, but here is a Light that follows us "all our way". In one of Mr. H. G. Wells's earliest books that distinguished author depicts the supposed adventures of a celestial being who has somehow blundered into this world. He gets shot at and wounded the very first day, which

brings home to him the terrifying knowledge that he has an exceedingly delicate body liable to be smashed up at any moment. He is squeezed into conventional garments and compelled to learn conventional manners, though he can never be made to understand why he should be expected to hand tea to guests in a drawing room and forbidden to help the maid carry the tray to the kitchen. A drunken tinker punches him on the nose for smiling at him, thinking the amiable overture was meant for ridicule. The ladies of the parish begin talking scandal about him. He gets hungry and is told he must find some way of earning a living. Disease and death make him aware of their presence. He sees that all living creatures have to suffer, that the strong are continually preying upon the weak and that a frenzied competition seems to be going on all the time between one individual and another, and one species and another, for nobody seems to know what. He is continually asking questions about these things, and getting no answer. As the puzzle grows darker he grows sadder until at length he bursts out with this: "What this world needs is the light of my own pure and beautiful world upon it!"

Most assuredly that is our need. We need light in the very temple of our visions and dreams lest even our aspirations be the children of delusion. We need light in the motive-house of our princi-

ples lest our actuating powers be the spawn of the night. We need light in the highway of our common practices lest the decision of the moment should become the tragedy of the years. We need light in all the knotty problems which confront us as members of national and international life. Where do we not need the light? "Send out Thy light and Thy truth and let them lead me." "In Thy light shall we see light." It remains forever true that in the Light that follows us we shall be safely guided when our own flickering torch is insufficient.

As we pass to the third stanza we are conscious that the note deepens but to swell.

> O Joy that seekest me through pain,
> I cannot close my heart to Thee;
> I trace the rainbow through the rain,
> And feel the promise is not vain
> That morn shall tearless be.

We remember that Matheson stated that this hymn was written under the stress of great suffering, a suffering which was intensified because it was borne alone. Here the quality of a great soul is revealed. We are grateful that he has shown us the principle that sustained him. He believed that through pain the divine Joy was trying to find its way to him.

That is high doctrine for some of us to believe and yet the pain-bearers have nearly all preached

it. Dr. L. P. Jacks has recently argued that man's body is adapted for the endurance of pain as well as for the enjoyment of pleasure. He declares that man's mind has the same two-fold adaptation. "Whoever made man intended him to have much pain and much pleasure too." That seems to have been the idea of the poet Blake:

> Joy and pain are woven fine,
> A clothing for the soul divine.

I think of Robert Louis Stevenson and the years in which he did not have a day's real health and I hear him saying, "I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary, and I have done my work unflinchingly." I think of Goethe and hear him say in old age, "I will say nothing against the course of my existence. But at the bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that during the whole of my seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being. It is but the perpetual rolling down of a rock that must be raised up again forever." I think of Elizabeth Barret Browning and see her propped up on her couch by cushions, and writing with a pencil on slips of paper—all her feeble hands could hold—works that the world knows are immortal. I think of the Bronte sisters—Charlotte, Emily, Anne—waging a victorious conflict with sickness and yet producing work which mankind will not willingly

let die. Anne has shown us in words of pathos and light that she too could trace the rainbow through the rain.

I hoped that with the brave and strong,
My portioned task might lie;
To toil amid the busy throng,
With purpose pure and high;
But God has fixed another part,
And he has fixed it well,
I said so with my breaking heart,
When first this trouble fell.

These weary hours will not be lost,
These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, anguish-tossed,
Can I but turn to Thee:
With secret labour to sustain
In patience every blow
To gather fortitude from pain,
And holiness from woe.

If Thou shoulds't bring me back to life,
More humble I should be,
More wise, more strengthened for the strife,
More apt to lean on Thee;
Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow;
But, Lord, whatever be my fate,
O let me serve Thee now!

These, and all the others of that countless host of sufferers of whom the world was not worthy, tell us that the final outcome of their struggles

and agonizings is something that can only be described by the great word—Joy. The problem of suffering cannot be solved by any theory or explanation. It can be solved by action, by faith, by trust in a suffering God. The keenest sufferer can find his pain swallowed up by God's joy and love. The weeds in the garden can all be pulled up. The good ship can outride the storms and come to harbour. The happiest people who have ever lived have not been those who have suffered least, but those who have suffered most. This does not mean that we should desire suffering. It does not mean that we should allow ourselves to get into a mood so morbid that we are not anxious to fight disease wherever we find it. It does not mean that we should give up our faith that the doctrine of saving health is a good doctrine. But it does mean that when suffering comes, as it does to all sooner or later, we should know that it is Joy seeking us through pain. There, for instance, is Paul who, like Matheson, had his thorn in the flesh and who saw that every man ought to rejoice always. He it was who rose to lyric heights in writing of the unspeakable joy he knew, while all the time he was a man battered by pain, loss, disappointment, betrayal and cruelty. And there is Jesus, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and at the same time the most profoundly joyous soul of history.

The cry of earth's anguish went up unto God,—
"Lord, take away pain,—
The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the wings that would soar,—
Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made
That it love Thee the more."

Then answered the Lord to the world He had made,
"Shall I take away pain?
And with it the power of the soul to endure
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes who lift from the flame
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles through the loss,—
Can ye spare from the lives that would climb unto mine
The Christ on His Cross?"

Matheson was ready with the answer. He had entered into the mystical rapture of the Cross. In his climb unto God he could not spare the Christ on His Cross. He was one of the heroes who "lift from the flame white brows to the sky." Nay he believed that the Cross had done the lifting.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee!

The Cross lifts man to his true place in the scheme

of things. It reveals, as nothing else reveals, man's incalculable worth. Christ died for us—what more could we say than this? Could there possibly be a more convincing demonstration of the infinite value of that which was redeemed at such a cost? So precious was man in the sight of the Son of God, that He was willing, in form of man, to suffer the doom of a vulgar malefactor for his sake. He recognized even in the worst a wandering child of the Father. He discerned in the very meanest the potentialities of the soul. He saw the treasure in the earthen vessel, the vein of goodness in the corrupted character, the life still struggling even in the grip of death. He knew that there was something great and beautiful in man—something worth dying for. It is at the Cross that we really appreciate the dignity of humanity.

Thus we are able to understand Matheson's conviction that the cross we bear bears us in turn. This is, indeed, the iron law of excellence. "No human being can be trained without blows," runs a line of Menander, which Goethe significantly places at the beginning of his autobiography. And elsewhere the apostle of culture reiterates the lesson:

> Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,
> Who ne'er, the weary midnight hours,
> Weeping upon his bed hath sate,
> He knows you not, ye heavenly Powers.

All the choicest blossoms in Matheson's garden had their roots in a dark ground. His knowledge and wisdom and poetic fancy sprang from his suffering. He could say with another poet, "The dear cross hath pressed many songs out of me." The cross led him to lavish the treasures of his life on others. Through the cross his moral nature gained stature and elevation. It was the cross that weaned him from an unsatisfying world and persuaded him to seek a lasting happiness with God. Surely the cross had lifted him up.

It did something more. It gave him a supreme confidence in the life immortal. Within his frail flesh as within a scaffolding personality is being built as a temple, so that when at last the scaffolding is taken away the eternal thing for which it was all purposed shall remain. He could not believe that the ascending struggle of his life should end in a hapless cinder heap. Some day he would see that his suffering was only the medium of an immeasurable mercy, and his sowing in tears but the pledge of the ultimate reaping in joy. The day he died there was placed by the side of his grave a huge emblem of white flowers, in the centre of which these words were spelled out in red rosebuds:

> And from the ground there blossoms red
> Life that shall endless be.

THE DOOR IN THE WALL

"Behold I have set before thee an open door."

Should Mr. H. G. Wells be given a place among the prophets? Those who have been following his output these last twenty years know that his career is positively strewn with prophecies, social schemes, manifestoes, Utopias, confessions of faith, pouring forth in a constant stream from his amazingly fertile and susceptible mind. He is invariably interesting, stimulating, provocative. There are many to assert that he is a true prophet, and at bottom a Christian prophet. On the other hand there are those who are inclined to doubt his claim to the title of a Christian teacher. They assert that there is a wide gulf between his message and the Christian faith. They suspect a new pose, or, at best, "a sincere and vivid impressionism turned momentarily on to the things of religion". My own view is that justice to Mr. Wells requires resistance to either tendency.

There is a great deal in his much discussed book, *God, the Invsible King,* with which I am in frank disagreement. And yet the passage I am about to quote is pure gold, unmistakably stamped with the image of the King. "Suddenly, in a little while,

in his own time, God comes. This cardinal experience is an undoubting, immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in the world. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to oneself, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim. It is completer and more intimate, but is it like standing side by side with and touching someone that we love very dearly and trust completely? It is as if this being bridged a thousand misunderstandings and brough us into fellowship with a great multitude of other people. . . . . The moment may come while we are alone in the darkness, under the stars, or while we walk by ourselves or in a crowd, or while we sit and muse. It may come upon the sinking ship or in the tumult of battle. There is no saying when it may not come. But after it has come our lives are changed. God is with us, and there is no more doubt of God. Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was perplexed and has found a solution. One is assured that there is a Power that fights with us against the confusion and evil within us and without. There comes into the heart an essential and enduring happiness and courage." This passage breathes an exaltation of spirit and a triumphant certitude that any one might envy. It is to be read and re-read with gratitude and reverence.

Christian teachers have felt that Mr. Wells's

serious divergence from Christianity does not lie in his cavalier treatment of such doctrines as the Trinity, but in his negative estimate of Jesus. His treatment of Jesus in *God, the Invisible King* is anything but satisfactory to the believer. In all fairness it must be added that one receives a different impression from his *Outline of History.* One feels that during the interval between these two books he has been seeing Jesus with his own eyes and realizing something of His strength and something of the grandeur of His cause. "We are left with the figure of a being, very human, very earnest and passionate, capable of swift anger, and teaching a new and simple and profound doctrine, namely, the universal loving Fatherhood of God and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven." He recognises the strength and impressiveness of the cry from the Cross. "Towards the end of the long day of suffering this abandoned leader roused Himself to one supreme effort, cried out with a loud voice, 'My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?' and leaving these words to echo down the ages, a perpetual riddle to the faithful, died." Later on we find this amazing confession: "This Galilean is too much for our small hearts." He who can speak thus has assuredly stood within the innermost sanctuary, although in trying to report the things he saw his tongue sometimes stammers.

In approaching our present study I could scarcely refrain from these general remarks concerning the religious teaching of Mr. Wells. Interesting as that subject is, it is not my intention to pursue it further. As a matter of fact I wish to turn to one of Mr. Wells's short stories entitled *The Door In The Wall.* It is a mere brief fantasy, but rich in suggestion, poignant in interest, with its aim and lesson hardly disguised. The tale is told by a rising young politician, recently advanced to a seat in the Cabinet. He recalls how as a sensitive boy of six he had been wandering one gray afternoon along the streets of a London suburb, when suddenly he became aware of a green door in a white wall, a door which he instinctively felt he was meant to enter. On doing so he found himself in a beautiful garden. It was a place of peace and delight to the soul. It was a place of joy and tranquility and love. The serene inhabitants of the garden treated him well. He spent some wonderful hours in "that dominion of heart's ease." All of a sudden he found himself back in the grey street. He went home a forlorn and sorrowful lad. When he arrived and related his marvellous experience of the afternoon he was soundly punished for telling lies. Often in the months which followed his pillow was wet with his tears. Often did he pray: "Oh God, let me enter my garden again. Oh God, let me dream of my garden."

For a few years he pursued the even tenor of his ways. But one day, when he had all but forgotten the magic afternoon, he stumbled once more upon the green door. It was in quite a different part of the town, but unmistakably the same door. This time he did not enter, though he had a strong desire to do so. He just made note of the place and resolved to visit the garden at some more convenient season. He was certain it would always be there and that the people would welcome him as before. But the next day, when he tried to find the door, it had mysteriously disappeared, and all his search proved unavailing.

From that time on he had occasional glimpses of the door in the wall, but always something prevented his going through to the garden. Once he drove past it as a young student preparing for the University. "I saw another door opening, the door of my career." Another time the vision beckoned to him when he was pursuing an ignoble errand, but his desire swept him on. He was already regarded as a "coming man" in Parliament. In spite of all his success he was haunted every now and then by the sense of unforgettable and perhaps still unattainable joys. He resolved to enter the green door if he should ever find it again. "If ever that door offers itself to me again, I swear I will go in, out of this dust and heat, out of this dry glittering vanity, out of this toilsome futility. I

will go, and never return." This was his vow, only to be broken three times more. The care of the world, the discipline of his party, the conventions of the family, and finally the prospect of a Cabinet position, carried him past the door. The last time he passed he was within twenty inches of it.

Although he has risen to a place that made him the envy of the world, he is extremely unhappy. "Here I am and my chance has gone from me. Three times in one year the door has been offered me—the door that goes into peace, into delight, a beauty beyond dreaming, a kindness no man on earth can know, and I have rejected it, and it has gone." Tortured by the memory of refused opportunity he becomes the victim of insomnia. This is followed by an obsession. He wanders about at night along the streets of the great city grieving over and seeking after a green door that opens into a garden. On one of these quests the end came. Walking in a trance he entered through an opening in some hoardings, and was found dead at the bottom of a shaft. Was it all a hallucination from the first, or had he really "A sense that in the guise of a wall and door offered him an outlet, a secret and peculiar passage of escape into another and altogether more beautiful world?"

The story is its own commentary. First of all

we allow it to remind us that *an open door means opportunity.* That is what it usually stands for in the Bible and in literature. When the hapless hero in Mr. Wells's story passed the open door it means that the opportunity was gone. When it says in the familiar parable of the Ten Virgins that "the door was shut" it means the same thing. It is a gloomy picture, and Tennyson has painted it in sombre line:

> Late, late, so late, and dark the night and chill.
> Late, late, so late, but we can enter still.
> Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.
>
> No light have we, for that we do repent,
> And learning this the bridegroom will relent.
> Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.
>
> No light, so late, and dark and chill the night,
> Oh, let us in, that we may find the light.
> Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.
>
> Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
> Oh, let us in, though late, that we may kiss
> his feet.
> No, no, too late, ye cannot enter now.

That is the discovery that every man makes when his reserves run out and he stands confronting a closed door. It makes one think of the words of George Eliot: "We meet our lost opportunities, and they gibber at us."

When Paul says that at Ephesus "a great door and effectual" was open to him he means that there

he had a splendid opportunity for serving Christ. When John was on Patmos the message reached him "Behold I have set before thee an open door". Doors of happiness and privilege had been closed around him. Still there were doors of opportunity that no man could shut. When the British Government say they have followed in the Far East the policy of the open door they mean that they desire for themselves and others the opportunity of pushing their trade. When Frances Willard adopted as her motto "Enter every open door" she simply meant that she saw the necessity of seizing every opportunity of usefulness. In every department of human activity a door is an opportunity.

Just here we think of that great saying of Jesus "I am the door", and we remember how J. M. E. Ross expounds it as meaning that Jesus is the great opportunity of the human race. That suggests all that men gain by accepting Him and all that they lose by neglecting Him. And what are those things? The question might be answered in a hundred ways, but here we follow for one brief moment His own words: "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." On the inside of that door there was safety. Readers of *The Pirate* will remember the anger of the hospitable Shetlanders at the bare idea of keeping a door bolted against a stranger who sought its protection from the

tempest. There is something sublime in the association of refuge with God Himself. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." And when our Saviour calls Himself the door, He gives refuge as one of the benefits enjoyed by those who enter. "If any man enter in he shall be safe."

And inside that door there is freedom—"he shall go in and out". If this seems like a paradox we must remember that the picture is that of the morning when the doors of the fold are thrown open and the flocks are allowed to roam. Mr. Ross says "It seems to suggest the spaciousness of the Christian life". Only those who have not entered imagine it to be a narrow and joyless thing. There is safety and there is liberty, and then beside, there is support, "he shall find pasture". Admission within the door leads on to nurture and fellowship. The life within that door is a life rich in spiritual blessing and progress. It is not enough to be just in at the door. Why should we remain half-starved and half-grown when all the grace of God is put within our reach? Here is a life that is a growth, whose end is potentially contained in its beginning, as the flower and fruit are in the seed. Jesus intends us to think of Him as the source and centre of all those influences which nourish the higher life and enrich human character with strength and beauty. And, like the door in Mr. Wells's allegory, He is to be found, not here or

there, but everywhere. At every stage of life's journey we may turn aside from the dusty highway and find ourselves in the Garden of the Lord. In Him God has set before us an open door which none can shut.

In the next place we learn from Mr. Wells's tale *the tragedy of being disobedient to the heavenly vision.* From childhood on this man had had a glimpse of ideal satisfactions that gave supreme happiness, and yet he had turned away.

> The Spring blew trumpets of colour;
> Her green sang in my brain.
> I saw a blind man groping
> "Tap-tap" with his cane.
> I pitied him his blindness,
> But can I boast I see?
> Perhaps there walks a spirit
> Close by who pities me—
> A spirit who hears me tapping
> The five-sensed cane of the mind,
> Amid such unknown glories
> I may be worse than blind.

That is the tragedy of the hapless hero of this story. To him had been given the vision and in his disobedience he was "worse than blind".

The power of vision, of seeing things in their ideal order and beauty, of receiving inspiration therefrom, and being filled with passionate desire for their realization—this is one of the noblest of human qualities. We all possess it at times. When

God has any great movement, any fresh line of progress that is to lead men and nations to happiness and service, He always begins with the dreamers. Abraham must see the vision of the great nation which was to spring from him, before he can go out as a pilgrim and sojourner on the earth. Moses must see the burning bush before he can attack Pharoah's hard heart and re-awaken the passion for freedom in his fellow-countrymen. Isaiah must see the Lord "high and lifted up" before his lips are touched with fire. All the heroes of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews were sustained through trial and suffering by a vision that ever fled before them. Jesus Himself was upheld and strengthened by a dream—"Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame". In personal life, religion begins with a vision. There is the glow of insight before the firm grasp of reality. We need the mount of vision to sustain us when we travel the path of duty. There are moments when dreams mean victory—

> For tasks in hours of insight will'd
> May be thro' hours of gloom fulfilled.

All the world has been thinking of John Bunyan. It is characteristic of that religious philosopher to give his pilgrim a vision by the way as he journeys through shadow and sunshine to the Celestial City.

On the way up the Hill Difficulty, he takes him aside to the Interpreter's House with his happy talk and parabolic pictures of the hidden incentives of the Christian life. On the top he gives him a pause in the House Beautiful, where he is comforted and cheered by the Three Graces. After the fight with Apollyon, he sees the vision of the Hand holding forth some of the leaves of the Tree of Life, "the which Christian took and applied to the wounds he had received in battle, and was healed immediately". After Doubting Castle he came to the Delectable Mountains, where were gardens and orchards, vineyards and fountains of water, where the pilgrims refreshed themselves. Then, finally, before the crossing of the river, they sojourned in Beulah-land, where they were within sight of the city they were going to. Always after some great struggle and victory, or before some dark and trying experience, Bunyan gives his pilgrim these heavenly visions to reward and sustain him. And in all this he holds the mirror up to life.

But the one fatal thing is to disobey the vision. Mr. Wells is true to life when he makes that the mistake we never get over. Most of life's mistakes are retrievable, but this is the sin that haunts and rebukes us. To disobey the vision is to miss the substance while snatching at the shadow. To disobey the vision is to sell a glorious birthright for

a sorry mess of pottage. He has disobeyed the vision who allows dazzling outward success to put true content away from him. Like the man in the story, he may gain, if not the whole world, yet a good share of what the world has to offer, and in the process loses his own soul.

Finally, we think for a moment on *the peril of delay*. We knowingly and deliberately pass by that which would afford us "an outlet into another and altogether more beautiful world". We are aware of the doors, and promise ourselves to enter at some more convenient season. Doors of literature, doors of art, doors of music, doors of kindly deeds, doors that lead into the wonderland of nature—how often we have told ourselves that we intend to enter these doors. One of the wise teachers of other days, who was obliged to practise economy in everything, with a scant salary and a large work, gave to the young men under him this maxim: "Seize the moment of excited curiosity". What he meant is perfectly clear. You wish to know the meaning of a word. While the wish is upon you consult the dictionary. Otherwise the wish may pass away, and you may die without knowing what the word means. If you are in need of a date, a fact in history, a truth in science, secure it at once, or the want may pass, and the reward which could easily have been gained when the mind was upon it will never be

secured. We need to use the impetus we have. Our interest and desire and attention are a force which must not be allowed to spend itself upon the air.

It is with tremendous emphasis that Paul asserts this truth of the immediate: "Now is the accepted time". Indeed it is all the time there ever will be. There is dignity in the conduct of the men whom Jesus found busy at their boats. "Follow me", he said. They left all and followed Him; and the chief beauty is that they did it at once. In Victor Hugo's great masterpiece, when the Bishop's goodness has opened to Jean Val Jean a door of salvation, "he felt instinctively that this priest's forgiveness was the greatest and most formidable assault by which he had yet been shaken; that his hardening would become permanent if he resisted this clemency; that this time he must either conquer or be conquered, and that the struggle, a colossal and final struggle, had begun between his wickedness and that man's goodness". In other words he felt the peril of delay. Every Christian minister has seen many lives go down not only by the tragedy of vice, but by the far commoner tragedy of delay. I appeal for instant decision. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, the road to heaven is paved with them too. Enter then, by the Door. Enter and you will be led from grace to grace and from strength to strength.

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

THE BLUE BIRD

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Maurice Maeterlinck, the well-known Belgian writer, is a mystic. Naturally that word has led some very practical folk to dismiss him from the mind as an idle dreamer. Nevertheless he is regarded by many competent critics as the most valuable of living philosophers. They earnestly believe that he is destined to increase "the world's permanent stock of wisdom". There have been few men in any one century for whom this high claim could be made. The secret of his genius is to be found in the fact that his interest is not in the scientific measuring of material things but in the endeavour to grasp the meaning of things immeasurable.

His friend William Lyon Phelps pays him the following tribute: "Maeterlinck is one of the great dramatists of modern times, and is perhaps, if we consider both the excellence of his work and its universal influence, the foremost living writer in the world. Although practically all of his work is in prose, he is commonly spoken of as a poet—an unconscious recognition of the spirit and quality of his writings—and he used to be called

the Belgian Shakespeare. He has modestly insisted that the late Emile Verhaeren, the Belgian poet and dramatist, is a more important figure in literature than himself; but he can get no one to agree with him."

There is an old Norman abbey near Rouen, where Shakespeare's *Macbeth* attracted wide attention. It is called the Abbey of Saint Wandrille. This Maeterlinck purchased and in it received the inspiration to write *The Blue Bird*. This delightful drama, notwithstanding its strong strain of pessimism, has done more to enhance the reputation of its author than any other of his works. In speaking of *The Blue Bird* Professor Phelps writes thus: "It carried his fame to the remotest parts of the earth, and unsupported, is sufficient to carry his fame to remote generations. It is the crown of his life's work, summing up all his best qualities as poet, dramatist, playwright. His early dramas are a greater success in the library than on the stage; *Monna Vanna* is a greater success on the stage than in the library; *The Blue Bird* is equally great in both places—it is a masterpiece in literature and all-conquering in the theatre. It is an original and beautiful play; it is a distinct contribubution to our present glorious age of drama."

One of the oldest and one of the most elusive quests of man is his *search for happiness*. Man is still engaged in that search and will be until the

end of time. It is a commonplace to describe our age as a restless age. It is an age of jazz and thrills, an age of the White Monkey and the Silver Spoon, an age of constant change and feverish excitement, an age of shorter hours and greater boredom, an age of the gramophone and the wireless. It is an age that has produced a new pessimism, has seen philosophies which reduce misery to a fine art, has shown enormous increases in insanity and suicide, and the neurotic temperament. This seething, restless age smites us with strange disquiet. We find it impossible to be still. There is always something calling us, alluring us, claiming us. Stand at the corner of a busy street in a great city and ask yourself, What is it these people are seeking? You say it is money or power or knowledge. That is surely a superficial reply. There is something hidden within and behind. Men and women pursue these things because they consciously or unconsciously believe they have the power to bring happiness. Ibsen makes one of his characters say, "It is only the spirit of rebellion that craves for happiness in this life". Would it not be as true to say that it is the deep craving for happiness which produces the rebellious discontent we feel? The fact of the matter is, the longing for happiness is an instinct deep in the heart of man.

Nor should we quarrel with that instinct. Does it not mean that we are meant for happiness? All

our new knowledge and inventions and cults leave us smitten with the old quest. Are we not right in claiming that at heart it is a noble quest? Has not God so ordained it that every healthy activity is associated with happiness? So long as the body is healthy it works happily. If the mind is to think gladly it must be kept healthy. Take away health from the conscience and it refuses to sing. Take away health from the heart and it looks out upon life through jaundiced eyes. Without happiness nothing in the end is right. It is true of family life, of educational life, of the life of daily toil. Surely there is a sense in which happiness is the test of life. To assume that God is better pleased with misery than with mirth is to make the mistake of the ancient Puritan and to produce a religion that bars the way to happiness. The desire for happiness is consistent with genuine religion and is full of prophecy and of promise. All of which leads to the important question, In what then does happiness consist?

Maeterlinck is interested in the answer to that question. *The Blue Bird*, with its beautiful allegory, its profound symbolism, its spiritual meaning, has a deep message for the heart of this restless age. Its central idea is the quest of the soul and the victorious destiny of the race. The soul of man is symbolized by two children who are sent forth by a fairy to find "the grass that sings" and "the Blue

Bird", which a sick child needs to make her well and happy. One earnest literary student is "convinced that Maeterlinck means more than merely happiness by the play. It is a man's quest for truth which he depicts. 'The grass that sings' is his symbol for the truths revealed by science and which touch our physical and material happiness. The 'blue bird' represents the truths belonging to the spiritual order, and which concern the realm of spirit and soul. So that the symbols stand for science and religion."

The children are given power to see the souls of things, and, led by light, are accompanied by the souls of mankind's common ministrants such as fire and water and bread. Endued with such power they travel far. Their travels take them into the land of memory and into the kingdom of the past. That kingdom stretches behind us in long perspective. It slumbers on the far horizon like a deserted city shrouded in mist. A few peaks mark its boundary; a few important acts stand out like towers, some with the light still upon them, others half ruined and slowly decaying beneath the weight of oblivion. Everything seems to be dead there, save only when memory lights it for an instant with an illusory gleam. "In reality it is alive, endowed with a profounder, more ardent life than either present or future. In reality this dead city is often the hotbed of our existence; and in

accordance with the spirit in which men return to it shall some find all their wealth there, and others lose what they have."

From the kingdom of the past the children go on into the unborn future, to the palace of happiness, and at last wake up in their own humble cottage. And as they go certain great truths emerge. "One by one all the blind, ancient terrors fall away." Death is no longer death. The forces of Nature are not longer wholly alien. The future is not to be feared. "Death and night keep watch and ward over the evils and terrors which are bound and conquered. Life means progress, destiny means victory, sacrifice means glory." This is what Maeterlinck would have us see. The tendency to focus our vision on the blue bird may make us miss the suggestions of the symbolisms.

Perhaps nowhere outside the Scripture is the lesson taught more beautifully that happiness when sought for itself is never found. Once the children found a blue bird in the Land of Memory, but in a few minutes it had turned black. Once they found flocks of blue birds in the Land of the Ideal, but presently the joyous, fluttering creatures lay dead in their hands. So, ever pursuing, ever failing, they at last awaken in their own little cottage with the morning light gleaming in at the windows and "their mother's wistful cares awaiting them". A neighbour comes to the door, troubled about her

sick child—a child who longs to have a bird. "I will give her my dove," says Tyltyl, and he takes it from the wicker cage. "Hullo! why, he's blue! He's my turtle dove, but he's much bluer than when we went away. That's the blue bird we were looking for. We went so far and he was here all the time. . . . There! take him to your little girl. He is not quite blue yet, but that will come."

Here is the fine touch of Maeterlinck. Luxuries and comforts did not produce happiness. As Light said to Tyltyl, "They are dangerous and will break your will". Happiness was there all the time. It was found unsought when they sought the happiness of others. The blue bird became blue when they gave it away, and you see the children dancing with spontaneous and uncontrolled gladness, singing "I am so happy, happy, happy!" Presently the neighbour returns with her child, who holds the bird, but in a moment it escapes and flies away. One who witnessed the play in England tells of a suggestive thing, added by the stage-manager, not in the original book, but, as he says, in keeping with its symbolism. For just as the curtain begins to fall, and while the boy is begging the audience to find the bird—"for they shall need it later on" —you see the blue bird flying back to its cage in the cottage.

I suppose there are few more tragic books in all sacred literature than the book of Ecclesiastes, in

which the Jewish sage preaches to mankind his sad and mournful sermon. The theme is the pursuit of happiness. The preacher was struck with the monotony of life, the awful regularity and terrible sameness of things weighed heavy on his heart. He saw in existence nothing but the everlasting repetition of the same thing. The sun rises in a red blaze of splendour above the rim of earth. He reaches the meridian and sinks in glory out of sight, but only in order that he may hasten once more to go through the same course again. The wind is constantly changing, but there is a striking lack of originality even about that. It has a limited programme. When it has run through the various items upon it—north, south, east and west, and the points in between, it must just begin over again. "It turneth about continually in its course, and returneth to its circuits." The rivers pour their many waters into the sea, and the sea never gets any fuller, nor the rivers any more empty; into the place where the rivers go, thither they go again. All things are full of weariness; man cannot alter it. That which hath been done, that which shall be done. There is no new thing under the sun.

To his tired brain all is vanity. Life has little joy, and death no consolation, except as he contemplated it as a grim equaliser, bringing down good and bad, wise and foolish alike, to a dead

level of nothingness. All go into one place; all are of dust and all turn to dust again. He turns in a revulsion of feeling from the whole problem and decides if happiness is to be found at all it is in the pursuit of pleasure. "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," is the motto he will take for his life, but it is only that he may fling it away from him with the despairing cry that this also is vanity. His very learning and the refinements of his mind become torments to him, for he perceives that his learning will not save him from the same fate as the fool. It is only a weariness to the flesh, results in the increase of sorrow, and he must die anyway. "Why then was he more wise!" And so his melancholy discourse goes on detailing his various efforts to obtain happiness. Throughout it all runs the same dull, despairing cry, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity".

Now this view of the monotony of things has a great deal of truth in it but it is not the whole truth. It is true that all things go through the same process of birth, maturity, decay and death. In some respects there is a deadly sameness throughout all creation from top to bottom. On the other hand there is infinite variety, endless difference, nothing is precisely like anything else in the world. Is it possible to find any species of plants or animals exactly like any other? Is not every dawn different and are any two sunsets alike? Though

day succeeds day in orderly procession, are any two precisely the same? The face of nature is the face of variety. The orginality of the Creator is unexhausted. And so with our daily lives and experiences. They are alike except in details. And yet it is those very details that make us what we are for better or for worse. Every tree is like any other, except in details that make one a stately oak and another a stunted shrub. Every man is like every other man except for the details which make one a gentleman and the other a rake. No two faces are alike and our real lives are as different as our faces. If the world seems full of weariness the fault must be in us, not in a world of infinite variety. It all depends on the eyes with which we look upon it. "I pity the man", says Heine, "who can go from Dan to Beersheba and say that all is barren, and so it is, and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers."

In some respects the philosophy of the ancient preacher sounds very modern. Be it noted that he had everything that heart could wish. Riches were his, "with all the devices that they bring in their train to kill time and drive dull care away". Here was a man who resided in the midst of luxury, with a host of servants to look after his comfort. "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy." Here was a man with a brilliant mind, as his writings

abundantly testify. He had artistic and literary tastes which he was able to gratify. What was the reason of his unhappiness? Is this book of Scripture trying to teach us that riches, power and intellect, artistic taste, refinement, learning, are all powerless to give any happiness to their possessor? By no means. All these things are good in themselves and may confer great benefits so long as they are not the end and aim of existence. If a man makes the attainment of happiness the one object of existence it will elude him even as it did "the preacher". If a man makes anything, whose chief object is self-gratification, the end of his existence, then however worthy the object in itself may be, he will defeat his own purpose.

This brings us, by way of contrast, to *the teaching of Jesus concerning the attainment of happiness.* When one thinks of the earthly life of Jesus with its hardships, disappointments, and sufferings, he is inclined to think that if ever a man might have justly said that life was not worth living it was He. He met misfortune on every hand; He was deserted by friends and persecuted by foes. In the end He died a felon's death. Like the ancient preacher He saw the misery of the world. But unlike him He sets to work to remedy it. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered, said the preacher. Jesus saw the crookedness in life

as plainly as he. But unlike him He set to work to make the crooked straight, to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach good-tidings to them that were bound, and to give a gospel of hope and encouragement to all. "He that findeth his life shall lose it" He declared. In losing Himself in the service of others, He found a joy that filled Him to the full. It is impossible to imagine Him sitting down and saying "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity". Out of His devotion to God came His glorious service of man—a service that made Him supremely happy. With that example before us we can understand the meaning of Henry Van Dyke's lines:

> Who seeks for heaven alone to save the soul,
> May keep the path, but will not reach the goal,
> While he who walks in love may wander far,
> But God will bring him where the blessed are.

"Those only are happy," wrote J. S. Mill, "who have their minds fixed upon some other object than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, or on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way." That teaching is in line with the teaching of Maeterlinck. What is more important, it is in line with the teaching of Jesus. Happy are the poor in spirit!

not the poor-spirited. Happy are those who are conscious of need, the teachable, the humble. Happy are they that mourn! Happy are they who have the capacity for grief when they are called upon to exercise it. Happy are the meek! Happy are they that are calm and gentle in the consciousness of great power. Happy are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness! Happy are they who desire more than anything else in the world to be genuinely good. Happy are the merciful! Happy are they whose compassion goes out to the lonely and lost. Happy are the pure in heart! Happy are they who are free from defilement, from evil wish or unholy intention. Happy are the peace makers! Happy are they who share God's peace and in a disordered and warring world become peacemakers. Happiness, according to Jesus, does not consist in the things which men seek. It comes unsought in the things that seek them. It is the principle of indirection at work. He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

> Heaven does with us as we with torches do,
> Not light them for ourselves: for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all the same
> As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely
> touched
> But to fine issues. Nature never lends
> The smallest scruple of her excellence
> But like a thrifty goddess, she determines
> Herself the glory of a creditor,
> Both thanks and use.

On the ocean to-night there are at least two types of voyager. The one has undertaken the trip for a definite purpose. This does not mean that he is indifferent to the glories of the sea. No one enjoys more than he the endless change of the water of the mighty deep, the ships that salute while they pass, the morning and the evening sun, the twilight and the evening bell. But his enjoyment is borne up by and woven in with the purpose for which he undertook the voyage. The other traveller is on the sea for no other reason than just to sail. He is uneasy lest he should fail to get the best out of the voyage. The result is that he does fail. The truest liver of the truest life is like the first voyager. He knows that the mere possession of things cannot and never will make him happy. He may have great learning, much wealth, much power, brilliant attainments. But his pleasure in these things is woven in with the purpose of the voyage. The blue bird is not at the end of the earth. It is here in the unpossessed possessions; in the joy of doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with our God. The dove becomes the blue bird when it is given away.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?"

The divine pursuit of the soul is the burden of Francis Thompson's great poem, *The Hound of Heaven*. In the opinion of literary critics it is one of the few great odes of which the language can boast. It has for its idea the chase of man by the Celestial Huntsman. God incarnate in Jesus is out after the soul, pursuing it wherever it may flee.

> For one astray, behold
> The Master leaves the ninety and the nine
> Nor rests till, love-controlled,
> The discord moves in harmony divine.

The hunted one flees, and seeks refuge in every possible form of earthly experience—at least in every clean and noble form, for, as John Kelman points out, there is nothing suggestive of the mire here. "It is simply the second best as a refuge from the best that is depicted, and the Great Huntsman is remorseless in His determination to win the soul for the very best of all." It is a similar flight to that described by Archbishop Trench:

> If there had anywhere appeared in space
> Another place of refuge where to flee
> My soul had found a refuge in that place
> And not in Thee.

We will enter into the meaning of the poem more intelligently if we keep before us some of the details of Thompson's life story. Even as a child he showed those characteristics that plainly marked his life. Always a weakling physically, this shy, unusual boy had his fancies that broke through language and escaped. As if by instinct he obeyed his own command: "Turn but a stone and start an angel's wing." When eleven years of age he was sent to college to prepare for a priestly vocation. After seven years of irregularity and apparent indolence he was taken home. Then his father, a medical doctor by profession, decided that Francis should follow in his calling. For six years at Manchester and Glasgow the experiment was made with disastrous results. Lectures were unattended and examinations untried. Nothing seems to have come out of these years except a love for opium which all but ruined his life. From now on he began to drift, and for three years was lost in London where he became a second De Quincey. He led a roving, starving life, picking up odd jobs, even boot-blacking, selling matches, and holding horses. Through it all he never lost his love for letters. His visits to the public library were kept

up until he was forbidden entrance because of his unkempt, ragged condition. Nor during his beggared life did he cease from prayer; nor did he ever lose his reverence for the things of God. All this is worthy of note in view of the misrepresentations of Thompson that persist unto this day. When he died Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, then the editor of *Merry England,* wrote strongly to the *Times* against these misconceptions: "The public only too greedily infer that Thompson was a degraded man —he who carried dignity amid all vicissitude; that he was a debauchee—he who lived as he sang, the votary of Fair Love. Nor need I adopt in his regard the fine passage in which Mr. Birrell defends Charles Lamb's 'drinking'. For Francis Thompson did not 'drink'. . . . But it is true that his health was wretched from first to last. It is true also that he doctored himself disastrously with laudanum from almost the early days of his medical studentship in Manchester. When he came to the streets of London, the drug delivered him in a manner from their horrors, and besides was, I think, some palliation of the disease of which he finally died—consumption. . . . No pen—least of all, mine—can do justice to him; to his rectitude, to his gentleness, to his genius. If he had great misfortunes, he bore them greatly; they were great because everything about him was great. It is my consolation now, amid tears for Thompson from

eyes that never thought to shed so many again, to know that he knew and accepted his fate and mission, and that he willingly 'learned in suffering what he taught in song'."

We can readily understand that noble defence of Thompson's character when we remember that it was Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, together with his gifted wife, who searched out the poet and drew him from his pitiable surroundings. Thompson had sent Mr. Meynell his essay, *Paganism, Old and New,* and a few poems, among which was the *Passion of Mary.* The manuscripts were "most uninviting and difficult in outward aspect," and yet bore the marks of genius. After many months the editor secured the longed for interview with this strange author. "The door opened, and a strange hand was thrust in. The door closed, but Thompson had not entered. Again it opened, again it shut. At the third attempt a waif of a man came in. No such figure had been looked for; more ragged and unkempt than the average beggar, with no shirt beneath his coat and bare feet in broken shoes." From that condition he was rescued for English literature and thus for the enrichment of his fellows, by the love of God incarnated in two loving hearts. He came to know that even though he made his bed in the sheol of misery and despair he could not escape from the divine presence. Is it any wonder that looking

back upon his redemption he should write out of a full heart concerning the pursuing love of the Eternal?

The Hound of Heaven opens with a picture of the soul foolishly fleeing from the pursuit of its divine Lover:

> I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
> I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
> I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
> Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
> I hid from Him, and under running laughter,
> Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
> And shot, precipitated,
> Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
> From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

The first covert in which the soul seeks to hide is its own life. But this is no hiding place from God since He created the soul and since it is instinct with the life of Him from Whom it came. The soul is the higher range of man's spiritual nature which relates him directly to God. We are most ourselves when we are nearest God. The moments when we are in closest touch with Him are our best moments—moments when deep calls unto deep, and we know even as we are known. Man's sense of dependence upon God for needed help is as truly instinctive as is his quest for the food by which his bodily hunger may be appeased, or for the sympathy by which his social affections may

be gratified. Man everywhere looks with reverent dependence and grateful hope to One Who in His own nature presents the supreme ideal as an actuality, and by Whose aid he feels that he may himself become more and more nearly conformed to that ideal. Here, at any rate, is no escape from God. We are not surprised in this realm to hear the approach of the Hound's feet.

> But with unhurrying chase,
> And unperturbèd pace,
> Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
> They beat—and a Voice beat
> More instant than the Feet—
> "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

But if the fugitive cannot find escape from "the tremendous Lover," in his own soul, neither can he find it in human love, for every one that loveth knoweth God. In this world of sin and folly there is always love in a thousand forms; love full of pity, full of patience, full of courage, love that suffers long and is kind; love that envieth not, is not easily provoked, is not puffed up, thinketh no evil; love that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. There is a father's love, love of husband and wife, love of friend and friend. What but love can fathom the heart of motherhood—a mother's pity, a mother's forgiveness, a mother's self-sacrifice?

> If I were hanged on the highest hill,
> I know whose love would follow me still;
> Mother o' mine, mother o' mine.

And what is all this love but the echo of

> A love which rises infinite degrees
> Above the tenderness of human hearts?

Why should we hesitate to judge God by what is divinest in ourselves? He did not so hesitate Who said: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father?"

Nor can he find escape amid the wonders of the world. He flees "across the margent of the world" and "smites for shelter at the gold gateways of the stars" and at "the pale ports o' the moon." He appeals to dawn and evening, to wind and lightning and storm to hide him from this divine pursuer. He finds that these "Eternities and Immensities" are not enough, that they are but servants of One mightier than they, and "that fear wist not to evade as love wist to pursue."

In despair he leaves "the long savannahs of the blue" and comes to earth again to seek refuge in the simplicity and innocence of little children. Nothing gives a clearer view of Thompson's inner nature than his unaffected love of children. He knew the child as few have known him. "Know you," he asks, "what it is to be a child? It is to have a spirit still streaming from the waters of

baptism. It is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief. It is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ears; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything." It is no wonder that Francis Thompson should sing:

> As you search with unaccustomed glance
> The ranks of Paradise for my countenance,
> Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod
> Among the bearded councillors of God;
> For if in Eden as on earth are we,
> I shall sure keep a younger company.
>
> . . . .
>
> Look for me in the nurseries of heaven.

It is no wonder that Francis Thompson wrote *Little Jesus.*

> Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
> Once, and just as small as I?
> And what did it feel like to be
> Out of Heaven, and just like me?
> Hadst Thou ever any toys,
> Like us little girls and boys?
> And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
> The angels that were not too tall?
> So, a little child, come down
> And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
> Take me by the hand and walk,
> And listen to my baby-talk.

The realm in which the child dwells is no place for one who would flee from the eternal Father.

I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

Finally, he seeks in Nature's delicate fellowship a harbour for his fear. Having drawn "the bolt of Nature's secrecies," having learnt "all the swift importings on the wilful face of skies," and having shared her moods in joy and sadness, he is driven to confess that Nature, "poor stepdame," cannot slake his drought. She, alas! can never "drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky" and show us "the breasts of her tenderness." If she is not red in tooth and claw, she is at best helpless before the tears and sorrows of man, for "Ah, we know not what each other says!" So once again we hear the patter of the Hound's feet and the Voice:

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st
not Me."

Thus, wherever he flees—in earth or sea or sky, in nature or in man—he cannot get away from God. The Hound of Heaven has run him down. He must face the pursuing Love at last. Then, naked, he awaits Love's uplifted stroke; he is smitten to the knee, utterly defenceless and alone,

standing "amid the dust of the wounded years," while his "mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap." Everything in which he placed his hope and trust has failed; dreams, music, and "the linked fantasies" of poetry yield and break before the deliberate pursuit of the Hound of Heaven.

Now that he can flee no longer he protests against the demands of his Pursuer. He has known all along that he was pursued by Love, yet a love that would demand a sacrifice beyond his power to render. He had sought his contentment in lonely fields. He was afraid to attempt great renunciation. He had "heard the trumpet sound from the hid battlements of Eternity" and he knew that the Trumpeter demanded heroic sacrifice. It was the cross he saw. But he did not know that something renounced is always something gained; he did not see that the cross is the condition of the crown. This he was to learn. In response to his question

> Ah! is Thy love indeed
> A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed
> Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

comes the Voice of Christ, tender and wooing and like healing balm:

> Alack, thou knowest not
> How little worthy of any love thou art!
> Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
> Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come.

And the poem ends with the recurring lines:

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest!
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

That great Scottish theologian and mystic, Erskine of Linlathen, said of the 139th Psalm: "This is the Psalm which I should wish to have before me on my death-bed." Augustine wanted to be left alone with the Penitential Psalms when he was dying. I have often whispered the 23rd Psalm to souls in flight for the homeland. I wonder why Erskine wanted this Psalm? Surely it was because it represents the soul finding it impossible to escape from God. Man can only find his perfect rest in some idea of God like that. He can put his trust whether living or dying in a fidelity that does not change, in a purpose that will ever persevere, in a love that will not let him go.

This Psalm is one of the most beautiful and spiritual productions in Old Testament literature. It is a magnificent piece of religious poetry, and

like all great art, it suggests far more than it can consciously express. Modern scholarship is able to say with definiteness that its date is very late. It seems to come from a time after the exile—that trying experience which purified the religious atmosphere of Israel and clarified its religious thinking. A whole world of thought lies between the idea of a local or tribal God and the noble picture of the ever-present God Whose spirit man cannot elude.

The writer uses figure after figure to convey the truth that had burned its inspiring message into his own soul. Whither shall I go from Thy presence? If on the wings of the morning I fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, even there shall Thy hand lead me. If in Sheol I make my couch, lo, Thou art there. The utmost limits of space cannot set bounds to God's habitation. The most opposite conditions, Heaven and Sheol, reveal God still pursuing the free spirit of man. Sheol is the world of the dead, the grim underworld of spirits. The shadowy character of the existence there is dwelt upon in Job, and two of the earlier Psalms conceive of this world as lying beyond the range of God's activity. The boldness of the writer is thrown into clear relief when he declares that if he makes his couch in Sheol, even there shall he be conscious of the all-pervading presence of the Divine. Earth and sea, life here, and the under-

world of the dead are all the dwelling place of God, and the wanderer in the deepest darkness is conscious of God's inescapable presence. We have not here a man searching for God and crying: "O that I knew where I might find Him;" rather have we here a soul all aglow with a living experience. He had been in the heaven of ecstasy and in the sheol of fear; he had wandered from farthest east to utmost west, and in every experience had found God with him, heightening his joy and lightening his gloom. God is familiar with all his ways, and observes all his most ordinary movements and actions. He reads his inmost thought even before it has formed itself in words. The picture is definite and suggestive. It is not the soul that is seeking God; it is rather God who is seeking the soul. We have sometimes spoken as if the search were on our side. But here we are face to face with the story of God's insistent pursuit of the human soul.

Francis Thompson is separated from the writer of the 139th Psalm by more than two thousand years, yet they are essentially one in spirit. The mystical psalmist, like the mystical poet, is almost paralysed by the thought that he cannot escape from God. In the end they both learn that it is only when we are willing at last to give up our own ways, to accept what God is offering, that the soul begins to understand that what He offers is worth

all, and more than all, that we could conceivably abandon for it. The chase is not the chase of anger, it is the chase of love, but it will very often seem as though it were bent upon our destruction. We cannot escape. The Shepherd will search His sheep until He find it although the sheep will hide and hurry away from the Shepherd's approach. I don't suppose there is one of us who would say that his whole life is completely open to this pursuing love of God. Somewhere or other in our lives we are turning to our own way, straying from the flock and from the Shepherd. And when His love reaches us it always seems like a judgment. What He asks of us may be the breaking with just what we care for most. And it seems like judgment; it is judgment. The love of God is no weakly, sentimental thing that is concerned to give us at any moment what may satisfy our desires at that time. The love of God knows that love is the one thing in the world worth having and living by, and therefore it will be relentless in its insistence that our self-complacency will be broken and our self-seeking abolished. In our childish ignorance we imagine that all this will mean a loss. But when we have surrendered, when the pursuing Christ has overtaken us, we shall find in His embrace that life is enriched and made complete.

May we not yield ourselves to Him now! Have

we not been far enough in flight to know there is no escape! Tired of ineffectual struggle against His high designs for us, shall we not yield to the pleading and passion of His mighty love? Let us highly resolve to cast aside everything selfish, and unworthy, and mean, all indifference and coldness of heart, everything by which we are fleeing from His love. Let us not seek to fly beyond this sea and sky. Let us rest in its beauty and enjoy its spacious freedom, and delight in its wide expanse. Let us not beat our wings against the dawn, hoping to quench the growing light. Let us dare to gaze upon the sun. This is God, Whose hands and feet are torn by many a thorn and Whose heart aches because we spread our wings to flee from His presence. This is God, Whose nature epitomizes all the love and sacrifice of the universe. This is God, our life, our rest, our joy.

Not where the whirling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!
The drift of pinions, should we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry;—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Genesareth, but Thames.

THE WORTH OF WORSHIP*

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."—Psalm 122:1.

It was on no ordinary occasion that the Psalmist uttered these joyful words. On the contrary it was the great occasion of the year. He was making the annual visit to the Temple at Jerusalem, where he would see the worship of God carried out in its perfection, with all its grandeur and magnificence. He was going also to the centre of his nation, the great centre of the nation to which the Jew always has been so intensely attached. There he would see the rulers of the Jews; there he would see the high priest of Jerusalem; there he would worship the Eternal in His temple. Says Plutarch: "You may find cities without walls, without schools, without markets, without theatres; but a city without a temple no man ever saw."

If for the moment we will transport ourselves to Palestine we shall see a company approaching. It is a band of one of the distant tribes which is hurrying to be present at Jerusalem during one of the great festivals. As they advance we catch

* A sermon preached at the dedication of the Yorkminster Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday morning, March 25th, 1928.

the sound of their voices, and, listening intently, we distinguish the words of our text: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Louder and louder swells the chorus, until the neighbouring acclivities echo the beautiful invocation: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee, peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

> From strength to strength with willing feet they
> are hastening
> Through Sharon plains and Baca vales so drear,
> And with glad songs the tedious hours beguiling
> 'Till Salem's towers and palaces appear.
> Then in sweet song they softly breathe the prayer,
> "Peace be within thy walls, Jerusalem:
> All who bestow their love on thee shall prosper,
> Eternal blessings shall descend on them."

This is the first formal discourse to be uttered in our new house of praise. The occasion itself seems to ask us to consider the subject of worship. This church is erected to train and feed the worshipful spirit. Not only by hymns and prayers, but by the influence of instruction and appeal, the main purpose of the services to be held in it on Sundays, year in and year out, till its material decays, is to stimulate and refresh the feelings of wonder and reverence, of obligation and gratitude and trust before the good God. The love of the sanctuary was one of the outstanding character-

istics of God's ancient people. Prophet and psalmist alike strive to express the passionate devotion of the people to the temple of worship. That temple was the centre and crown of national life. This is why the Jews have bequeathed to the world its noblest legacy. Rome bequeathed law; Greece bequeathed art; but the Jews bequeathed religion.

We may go further back still and notice that the spirit of adoration is as old as the records of humanity. From the border line of light we feel our way back toward the birth of man by the ruins of temples. Of early races and nations that have perished, we know in many instances nothing more than this,—they worshipped. The disposition to worship belongs to the structure of the human soul. Religious ideas are changed by the progress and diffusion of knowledge. Forms and theories of worship are shattered and left behind by the enlargement and march of the intellect. But does anyone seriously imagine that worship itself will be outgrown? Think of this planet filled with inhabitants, and no spire or dome of praise in it, no pulse or throb of adoration in all its millions. Would you count it an advance of knowledge, if it was purchased at such a price that there should never be again on earth any tower to represent a place of adoration, any organ-music to bear up an anthem, any hymn of pleading or

penitence, any public or secret supplication for spiritual protection or strength, any sermon to exalt the wonders of the world's Saviour? Worship will never cease unless wonder dies in the heart of man, and unless the sense of the Eternal is expunged from the soul.

1. With that by way of introduction I should like you to notice that worship is *a devotional affirmation of faith in God.* The service of public worship is the public testimony of the body of worshippers that they know that God is, that a man can come into relationship with God. In every religion and in all ages men and women have instinctively felt that God is specially near when they assemble together for praise and prayer. Worship seems to bring man almost within sight and touch of God. He feels that God loves to make His presence felt in the family worship of the church, and in such family worship the soul of man is open to divine impressions in a way that it is rarely open amid the hustle and bustle of the world. Apart from public worship it is very difficult to keep sensitive the sense of God's nearness. There are those who claim that they can worship God as much in a country walk, or in the reading of the Bible and other books, as if they met together with fellow-worshippers within the walls of a church. But such a conception of worship is surely a selfish one, and all selfishness thickens the

veil between man and God, and makes it more difficult for man to hear the still small voice. It is highly questionable whether a man who finds all the worship he wants in private meditation and private reading long keeps the habit of private devotion. If he has a real desire to come into touch with God, a desire kindled to a whiter glow in private devotion, then that desire itself will send him to join with others who share the same desire.

I do assert then, to-day, that it is a cause for devout gladness that such an edifice as this is reared for such ideas in this thriving city. I do not say that we have built it for God, as though He requires it for His honour. He to whom the universe belongs looks not for temples made with hands. All the praise that God the Spirit asks is devout emotion, clean affections, trust in His love. But that we may nurture devout emotion, that we may find the calm in which to seek Him, and the aids for upward-looking thought, we need sacred places, rooms that are shielded from the intrusion of worldly suggestions, an air that is thrilled with devout music and spiritual appeal. We need the help of consecrated seasons and holy spots in order that we may the more readily worship the Father in spirit and in truth. I know there are no sacred places until souls make them sacred. But how much easier can souls make those places sacred that are not invaded by the rough conflicts and the

coarse passions of the world! There is a verse of a hymn that tells us,

> All space is holy, for all space
> Is filled by thee; but human thought
> Burns clearer in some chosen place
> Where thy own words of love are taught.

This "chosen place" has been erected in testimony of our faith in our Heavenly Father. It is a tribute of devotion and allegiance to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

2. Public worship is *an affirmation of the kinship and fellowship of religious people.* Religion is a social thing. It is indeed the chiefest and most effective cement of society. The religion of Jesus is pre-eminently a social religion, a religion of common worship of a common Father. How can those who say "Our Father, who art in heaven" stand apart from each other and refuse to acknowledge their family relationship in the presence of that Father? The Ancient Mariner in Coleridge's poem sings—

> O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
> 'Tis sweeter far to me
> To walk together to the kirk
> With a goodly company!
> To walk together to the kirk,
> And all together pray,
> While each to his great Father bends,
> Old men and babes, and loving friends,
> And youths and maidens gay!

But the sweetness of all that unhappily seems to be a thing to which the moral palate of an ever-growing number of people within our country is becoming increasingly callous and insensible. Sunday motoring is sweet; Sunday golf is sweet; Sunday bridge-parties are sweet; Sunday visiting is sweet; but not Sunday worship.

There is an infinite value in church fellowship if men would only recognize it. Of late years psychologists have given much study to the psychology of the community. The influence of mind upon mind and heart upon heart in public worship is the most subtle and powerful influence of all. The praise, the prayer, the Scripture-reading, the preaching, all go not merely to feed the devotion of the individual, but to strengthen the fellowship feeling of the congregation. There is a communal as well as an individual soul. The devotion of the individual helps to feed the devotion of the community, while the devotion of the community intensifies the devotional spirit of the individual. There is a wireless telegraphy of feeling from heart to heart. Public worship generates an atmosphere, and in that atmosphere thoughts too deep for words and feelings that no plummet can sound come to the minds and hearts of the worshippers. God loves to be worshipped in the congregation of His children because He wants to be at home with His family.

Nor can a religious man contribute his spiritual endowment to the world without joining with kindred souls in an organized effort. Edward Rowland Sill, speaking of his spiritual isolation, wrote to a friend: "For my part I long to 'fall in' with somebody. This picket duty is monotonous. I hanker after a shoulder on this side and the other." We learn to keep step when the whole company is marching. Each man's courage is augmented as he touches elbows with his fellows.

> Who cares for the burden, the night and the rain,
> And the long, steep, lonesome road,
> When at last through the darkness a light shines
> plain,
> When a voice calls "Hail" and a friend draws rein,
> With an arm for the stubborn load.
>
> For life is the chance of a friend or two
> This side of the journey's goal,
> Though the world be a desert the long night through
> Yet the gay flowers bloom and the sky shows blue
> When a soul salutes a soul.

"One of you shall chase a thousand, and two shall put," not two thousand as we might naturally suppose, but "ten thousand to flight." The church with its public worship transcends all that is sectional and selfish, for the worshippers realise that they are not just a local band of people met for their mutual benefit and for the pursuit of a common object, but that they belong to the Holy

Catholic Church throughout all the world, to the great host of which "part has crossed the flood, and part is crossing now." They are a company of a regiment, of a division of a grand army. The fellowship of worship can never be confined to a mere local and selfish association. It is the greatest, the most catholic, the least selfish fellowship in the whole world.

3. Public worship is *an affimation of our desire to follow the example of Christ.* What I mean will be brought back to you if I quote one verse from Luke's Gospel: "And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up: and he entered as his custom was into the synagogue on the Sabbath day." Christ was glad to go into the house of the Lord, for He regarded public worship as a sacred duty and a helpful privilege. He went regularly to church and to a church that was far from perfect. Its ritual must have seemed obsolete to Him, its ceremonial must have been a trial to Him, its preaching constantly refuted the very truths He was trying to teach, yet He "entered into their worship that He might share with fellow believers His expression of trust in His and their God."

Christ was well aware that men need the inspiration that comes from the sanctuary. Profoundly true are the words of Plato: "The horses of the chariot of the soul pull both ways." How powerful and persistent is the earthward drag! The

world is ever with us late and soon. Strive as we will we cannot escape its spell. It is hard to keep the soul on the top, to follow life's loftiest ideals, to live all the time for eternal values. The best of us grow weary and become discouraged. At such times we need inspiration. If we are wise we will place ourselves where the pull of the transient slackens and the pull of the eternal is potent. It is nothing short of folly for men to cut themselves off from the worship of the sanctuary. In Lord Balfour's book, "The Foundations of Belief," he speaks of "a psychological atmosphere, a climate favourable to certain modes of belief." In the climate of God's house men forget life's distractions and character receives its crown.

Men and women would not assemble themselves together if they did not feel the inspiration of such fellowship. The world is forgotten and heaven is opened. The hardest-headed man of business, the politician who gives and receives the hardest knocks, the working man whose mind during the week is full of his trade, all in the assembly of believers forget their worries and feel that there is something compared with which everything else sinks into insignificance. Man wants a heaven as well as an earth. The soul with its transcendent interests asserts its supremacy, and he feels that if he neglects the culture of his soul, and loses his soul

in consequence, the gain of the whole world to him is but loss.

Furthermore it is worship that quickens all the faculties of a man's life. This age is more and more an age of specialization. Men are simply compelled to throw their energies into certain lines and to neglect certain parts of their nature altogether. We all remember the lament of Charles Darwin that he had lost the taste which once he had for music and poetry, and had become a mere machine for observing facts and grinding laws out of them. No one can deny that men are in the same condition to-day. They see amiss because they do not see with the whole soul. They are robbed of a full-orbed activity. The corrective for all this is worship, for reverence is the highest activity of the soul. "Like the fly-wheel in a factory, it calls into movement all the multitudinous wheels of man's complex personality." Therefore, "if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee." And there remberest! It was in the sanctuary that the man would be likely to recall the quarrel. It was the altar that was to revive his memory and quicken his conscience. The altar influences all the faculties in the same salutary way. Worship steadies the reason, chastens the emotions, vivifies the imagination, braces the will, spurs the spirit of enquiry, and gives unto man the full and free

possession of all his faculties vitalised and alert.

It is well at the opening of this beautiful sanctuary to remind ourselves that never was worship more needed than to-day. This does not mean that we shall forget that all honest work done for the love of God and the good of our fellows is worship; that "he prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small." This does not mean that we shall forget that the practice of human kindness outweighs all chants and prayers; that "it is much easier to rave religiously than to do well!" that "blasphemy is more pleasing to the Eternal than the hypocritical homage of the sanctimonious." But this does mean that God calls for worship in spirit and in truth, that the world calls for practical mystics, who test their convictions by the standard of the sanctuary and look out upon life with the eyes of the Heavenly Father. Thus we shall feel the joy of devoting our new religious home to the highest uses and the most sacred truth which the heart of man can serve, and the thought of man can entertain. And far above the elements of nobleness and beauty which the genius and skill of man have wrought into its workmanship I trust and pray that the consecrating nobleness and beauty of it may ever be that, in a world of change, and in a city singularly blessed in outward good by the providence of God, it stands devoted to the unchanging love of the Father of all spirits, who

accepts and blesses the worship of the humble heart.

Frail children of dust,
And feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust,
Nor find Thee to fail:
Thy mercies, how tender,
How firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless might!
Ineffable love;
While angels delight
To hymn Thee above,
Thy humbler creation,
Though feeble their lays,
With true adoration
Shall lisp to Thy praise.

DR. CLARENCE L. STARR

A MEMORIAL ADDRESS

It is only fitting that we should hold a memorial service to Dr. Starr at Yorkminster. For many years he has been identified with this congregation. He has served on its various boards and at one time was Superintendent of its Sunday School. He held the office of trustee at the time of his death.

We are gathered together to-day, a company of friends, to commemorate the life and death of one through whom all our living is fairer. As one unpayably indebted to him for personal friendship and for the heritage of rich service to mankind, be mine the privilege of speaking for a moment about his life and character.

He was always a brother to me. I was always sure of him and surer of myself when he was at hand. In times of perplexity he was like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He was to me for many years a friend who unconsciously showed me, as in a mirror, more of the spirit of the ministering Master than any man I have been privileged to know. Once permitted to enter behind that reserved exterior—it was impossible

not to love him. To know him was to believe in him as a true and sincere expression of the Christian spirit. In the time of physical refreshment on the golf links, where his humour was like his mind, clean and wholesome, or in the close intimacy of personal companionship, when the strength of his friendship was released, one prayed to be worthy of such honour. The deep spiritual tone of his own religious life is a sacred remembrance for all who really knew the man. Amidst a multiplicity of professional duties he was a close companion of the Great Physician.

Dr. Starr was a tremendous worker. He believed in the dignity of work, because for him work meant service. He knew that peace and happiness of life depend largely upon the amount of conscience that each puts into the task allotted to him. His daily calling was a sphere of service. The labour and toil of his life took on new meaning, because he regarded them not as a means of personal aggrandizement, but as an opportunity of serving others. We must not take a life like that for granted. It was a great gift. Here was a blameless soul and stainless character. Here was a man of incorruptible personal integrity. He left his name absolutely untarnished. He left it glorified with the beauty of a true and serviceable life.

The one thing that always impressed me most about his personality was its absolute sincerity.

How refreshing it is to meet such a man! To know a person who is absolutely sincere, who means what he says, is like the tonic of a mountain breeze. You may not agree with him in many of his opinions and convictions, but none the less there is a moral elevation about such a soul which compels your respect. In presenting him once for an honorary degree I applied to him words I should like to apply to-day.

> Here is a sterling nobleman who lives the truth he knows,
> Who dreads the slavery of disease and fears no other foes;
> Who scorns the folly of pretence, whose mind from cant is free,
> Who values men for worth and sense and hates hypocrisy.

I think, also, of his strength. He was strong in purpose and in action; strong within and strong without; all the way up and all the way down, all the way around and all the way through; first, last and always—strong! Nothing is needed to argue the imperial majesty of such manhood. We may be sure that such character abides. We bring nothing into this world; we can carry nothing out of it. We ourselves depart with all the accumulation of tendency and habit and quality which the years have given to us. We ask therefore even at the grave of the illustrious, not altogether what

great achievement they have performed, but chiefly of what sort they were; what the interior nature of the man was, what were his affinities? I will rejoice to-day that the affinities of my friend were with the good, the true, the noble. And I will believe that such character outlives the centuries. The noblest workers of our world bequeath us nothing so great as the image of themselves. Their task, be it ever so glorious, is transient but the majesty of their spirit is eternal. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

On Christmas night he slipped the moorings of time and space, and sailed out into another land,

> And left us thinking how wondrous fair
> It need must be since he lingers there.

So the earthly chapter in the history of this loyal soul came to its close. The brilliant surgeon, the keen administrator, the prophet of physical righteousness, the Christian gentleman rests from his labours. But all over the land men and women rise up to call him blessed because of the sympathy and skill manifested on their behalf when as little children they fought their fight for physical efficiency in the Sick Children's Hospital. Soldier men in heaven and on earth recall the self-sacrificing, modest Colonel who gave six of the best years of his life as his contribution to the nation's fight for freedom. In the hearts of a multitude of

private citizens, whose despair and desolation he helped to transmute into courage and conquest; in the memories of those whose broken bodies and broken spirits he touched with healing hands, his works do follow him.

As I stand here amid the multitude of those who loved and honoured him, thinking about the simplicity and modesty of his life, I recall for you the sturdy sentences in which John Bunyan described how Mr. Stand-fast—a name we might well apply to Dr. Starr—left this world:

"There came forth a summons for Mr. Stand-fast that he must prepare for a change of life, for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from him any longer. So he went down to the River. Now there was a great Calm at that time in the River; wherefore Mr. Stand-fast when he was about half-way in, stood awhile, and talked to his companions that had waited upon him thither. And he said, 'This River has been a Terror to many —yet the thoughts of what I am going to doth lie as a glowing Coal at my Heart. My toilsome days are ended. I have formerly lived by Hear-say and Faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight.'

"Now while he was thus in Discourse, his countenance changed, his strong man bowed under him, and after he had said, 'Take me, for I come to thee,' he ceased to be seen of them."

DR. GEORGE CROSS

A MEMORIAL ADDRESS

It is very difficult, in a few sentences, to convey the impression which gradually grows up from frequent contact with a nature so genuine, clear-sighted, active and many-sided in its interests as that of a revered teacher and friend like Dr. Cross. No fear of the exaggeration to which we are all prone in time of sorrow shall prevent me from saying that George Gross was the most stimulating and original professor in theology I have ever known. When he spoke every student felt that he had something to give, some message of his own. He never seemed to be merely saying things, but to be thinking aloud and with an intensity and originality most inspiring and impressive. His wealth of knowledge, his unerring spiritual insight and his felicity of language gave him the ear of students who wanted to learn.

Here was a man who sincerely loved God with his mind. He believed that God is in all truth and is always seeking to lead His children to its fuller discernment. To be afraid of truth in any department of knowledge, to prevent scholarship from going forward in the ways of reverent investiga-

tion would have meant for him distrusting God, believing in the stagnant God of Deism, not the living God of Christianity. He never lost his head, never mistook half-truths for truths, or a will-o'-the-wisp for the morning star. He did not sail blithely over an uncharted sea without a compass. He could always sing "Chart and compass come from Thee; Jesus, Saviour, pilot me." But he did not halt when he should move forward; he did not spend his time and energies in the past when God was marching on; he did not seek the living among the dead, nor think of faith as essentially an attitude toward past facts, rather than as a companionship with a Living Leader. For him Christianity was never a temple among the tombs. It was ever a living, creative religion for the present day. Our friend could never even imagine that the ultimate facts and forces of the Gospel can lose any of their value by being better understood.

And here was a man who sincerely loved God with his heart. He never belittled the part that feeling plays in the religious life. Schleiermacher had taught him that the essence of religion may be found in the feeling of utter dependence. At times he recognized himself as most consciously religious in

> that serene and blessed mood
> In which the affections gently lead us on.

Brilliant in intellect, George Cross had the heart of a little child. In a universe where there are so many different ways of getting at reality he refused to be monopolized by one process. How well he understood that there are some things you cannot know without love. And to him love was not simply emotion. It was a method of cognition. It was a roadway into truth. In an old note book I discovered that he had commended to us on one occasion the language of Dante: "The life of my heart, that of my inward self, was wont to be a sweet thought which went many times to the feet of God."

George Cross was a humble man. I do not mean that he took a false measure of himself or pretended to be less deserving than he was. He did not take a lower estimate of his powers and gifts than was true. I mean that his true life was never his own. He could not live in himself. All that he was came into him out of God and carried him out of his own energy back into God. His humility was simply the precise and sincere recognition of this. Hence it became his one true relation to the reality of things. When strength and gentleness combine they make great character. Those qualities which Wordsworth coveted for England, "manners, virtue, freedom, power," were all displayed in the life of our friend, and they all sprang primarily from that humility which exalts.

Now that he is gone, I find myself thinking not so much of his great contributions to the world of religious thought—and they are many—as of his tenderness, his courage, his all-embracing sympathies. To me he was always so kind, so helpful, so like a real brother that a great fountain of happiness wells up in my heart whenever I think of him. It was a joy to know him and to have had his friendship.

But it is time to cease from speaking. All unskilfully I fear, yet with sincere affection, I have woven this modest wreath for his tomb. His charm was of the kind that we fail to reduce to words. Friendship occupied a large space in his life, and all who knew him are conscious that,

> Now the candid face is hid
> The frank, sweet tongue has ceased to move,

something has gone from us never to be replaced till that daybreak which shall unite all who belong to one another. But over the sense of our loss there rises and remains the feeling how much God indicates in this life of which only some small portion is fulfilled. The world of expectation and love thus suddenly closed for earth must be open somewhere. There must be ministries in other spheres for which Dr. Cross was prepared and summoned. And if we must say, "Earth to earth, dust to dust," we shall also say "Spirit to spirit." A true child of God we commit into the everlasting arms.

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